

Khamenei: No Palestine compromise

NICOSIA (R) — Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Tuesday that Israel must be obliterated and the Palestinian issue must be resolved. "The Palestinian issue is the goal of obliteration of Israel," Tehran Radio quoted him as saying. "There is no difference between land occupied before or after 1967. Every span is part of the Muslim homeland and any government there except a government of Islam and Muslim Palestinians is a usurper," Khamenei said. "Jihad for returning the occupied lands to Palestinians is a divine duty and any compromise is treason," the cleric told 150 foreign guests attending the first Islamic conference on Palestine held in Tehran. His remarks appeared aimed against the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) which seeks a two-state solution. Among the speakers at the three-day meeting's opening session Tuesday was Ahmad Jibril, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, said Tehran Radio.

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Velayati due in Paris today

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati will fly to France Wednesday to discuss a diplomatic solution to the Gulf crisis and mutual ties, the Iranian news agency IRNA said. It said that Velayati would hold talks with President Francois Mitterrand and Foreign Minister Roland Dumas during his two-day stay. "Among topics to be raised... is the new diplomatic moves in the region following the approval of a Security Council resolution authorising the use of force against Iraq," said the agency, received in Cyprus.

Major to visit Gulf

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister John Major will soon visit British forces confronting Iraq in the Gulf, government officials said Tuesday. The officials were unable to give a precise date for the trip but said it would be "shortly" and would depend on strategic considerations.

Man to hang for possessing drug in Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — A court in Khartoum has sentenced a man to hang for possessing hashish, a Khartoum newspaper said Tuesday. Guwat Al Musallah said the man was caught with a large quantity of hashish, a type of hashish, in his home in Khartoum's twin city Omdurman. Four Sudanese and an Egyptian have been executed in Sudan since Omar Al Bashir seized power last year and introduced tough penalties for possessing or selling hard currency and hashish.

Iran frees 200 PoWs

BAGHDAD (R) — Two hundred Iraqi prisoners of war (PoWs) released by Iran returned to Baghdad Tuesday, the Iraqi News Agency reported. The PoWs arrived on an Iraqi-chartered plane. More than 1,000 Iraqi PoWs have been released since Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati visited Baghdad two weeks ago. Iraq has sent home 238 Iranians, pardoned for crimes they had committed during captivity.

Ershad resigns

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh President Hossain Mohammad Ershad has resigned, state television said Tuesday. It said Ershad has called a special session of parliament on Saturday to name a vice-president who would head a caretaker government until elections. The television said Ershad had asked opposition parties to nominate a vice-president who would run the country's interim administration. "The ball is now in the opposition's court," he said. He also said parliamentary elections would be held before a presidential election.

Connally in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP) — Former U.S. Treasury Secretary John Connally is in Baghdad, apparently trying to negotiate the release of employees of a Texas oil company held in Iraq, officials said Tuesday. Connally, a member of the board of Coastal Corp., travelled to Baghdad with officials of the Houston-based oil and gas company for talks with Iraqi officials. Iraq media reported Tuesday that Oscar Wyatt, the head of Coastal Corp., and his accompanying delegation met Monday night with Hussein Kamel Hassan, the minister of industry and military industrialisation.

Doi may visit Iraq

TOKYO (R) — Socialist Party leader Takaaki Doi said Tuesday he would accept an invitation to visit Iraq to try to gain the release of Japanese nationals. Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan told a visiting socialist legislator in late November that his government would welcome a visit by Doi. The first woman to head a political party in Japan, Doi led a successful opposition front against a ruling party plan to send troops to the Gulf after U.S. pressure for a more visible Japanese presence in the region.

King, returns after one-day trip to Iraq

Jordanian, Iraqi, Palestinian and Yemeni leaders hold mini-summit in Baghdad

By Lami K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Yemeni Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh Tuesday held talks in Baghdad on the Gulf crisis and the next moves in efforts to resolve the conflict peacefully.

The four leaders held a round of closed talks preceded by a meeting attended by senior aides, Jordan Television said. No details were immediately available.

The mini-summit was expected to have focused on U.S. President George Bush's initiative to open direct talks with Iraq on the Gulf crisis. The initiative involves an invitation to Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to the White House and an offer to send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad.

Iraq has accepted the proposal

in principle, but has not responded on the specific timing of the contact, according to American officials.

The Bush initiative followed the endorsement by the U.N. Security Council of a resolution endorsing the use of force to dislodge Iraq from Kuwait.

King Hussein, who was accompanied by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, returned home late Tuesday.

Well-informed sources expected the mini-summit to coordinate a unified negotiating position ahead of the expected Aziz visit to the U.S.

Yemen's Beedh arrived here Monday and held talks with the King before flying with him to Baghdad Tuesday. The King's talks with the Yemeni leader also dealt with the American decision to lift its embargo on dialogue with Iraq, according to senior officials.

Political analysts believe that the American move paves the way for Jordan to play an important role in preparing the ground for the American-Iraqi encounter and laying the basis for a negotiated settlement of the Gulf crisis.

They pointed out that despite inter-Arab differences — including undeclared punitive measures against Jordan — Amman has been trying to deescalate tension with Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti ruling family.

In a move apparently aimed at mending fences with Saudi Arabia, Amman has decided to send back to Riyadh Jordan's Ambassador Naser Al Bataineh three months after recalling him due to differences over the Gulf crisis (See story on page 3).

Analysts believe that Jordan is preparing itself to play a mediating role by retaining its good offices with all parties involved in the crisis.

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Iraq allows all Soviets to leave, demands compensation

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq announced Tuesday it was allowing the nearly 3,300 Soviet experts still in the country to leave, but demanded that the Kremlin compensate for terminating their work contracts, the official media reported.

The radio and the Iraqi News Agency (INA) said the decision was made by the ruling Revolutionary Command Council, which is headed by President Saddam Hussein.

The radio and INA quoted a council statement as saying the decision to let the Soviets leave from Wednesday was made "in order to avoid any misunderstanding and so that this issue of Soviet experts remains outside the framework of the various deals under way which regrettably involve the Soviet Union."

"We have decided to allow all Soviet experts wishing to travel out of Iraq to do so, provided that the Soviet government alone assumes full responsibility for consequences of breaking contracts in this regard," the statement said.

Iraq had warned foreign companies and employees that it would demand compensation for any contract breached after its

Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. Iraq banned foreigners from leaving the country in response to a U.S.-led military buildup that followed the invasion.

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin said in Moscow that no official word of Iraq's offer has yet been received. But he said Soviet officials in Baghdad "are authorised to settle this issue, the legal aspects of all problems arising in this connection."

A senior Soviet oil ministry official, Sarkis Arkilian, has been in Baghdad for more than a week trying to negotiate the Soviets' release.

President Mikhail Gorbachev's spokesman, Vitaly Ignatenko, said Tuesday, 3,232 Soviets remain in Iraq. They are mostly construction workers, pipeline layers and oil and gas industry technicians under contract to official agencies.

The Soviets in Iraq have not been listed among the hundreds of Americans, Europeans and Japanese held at strategic locations to deter attack.

Iraq, which previously insisted Soviet workers could leave only after contracts expired, had accused Moscow, a former key ally and armourer, of planning to use

the presence of its nationals in Iraq as a pretext for sending troops to the Gulf.

Moscow last week voted for U.N. Security Council Resolution 678 authorising war against Iraq if it refused to withdraw its army from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze warned Baghdad that Moscow would send troops to the region if Soviet citizens in Iraq were mistreated.

Japan, stung by claims that it has not done enough for its hostages in Iraq, said Tuesday it was sending an envoy to Baghdad and drawing up a contingency plan ahead of the Jan. 15 deadline.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Taizo Watanabe said Kumasada Kume, the ministry's head of consular and emigration affairs, would arrive in Baghdad Wednesday and stay for three days.

"Our government has been criticised by the families of the hostages for not doing enough. They felt they were abandoned by the government and not enough attention was being paid to them," he told a news conference.

In Canberra, Prime Minister

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Ortega discloses contacts with U.S. over Gulf

By Lami K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega disclosed Tuesday that he had prior contacts with the American administration before embarking on his ongoing mission to resolve the Gulf crisis.

Ortega, who visited Baghdad twice last month, said that he discussed his mission with an American envoy in Managua before coming to the region three weeks ago.

He did not disclose the name of the American envoy but the Jordan Times has learned that the American official is a former senior diplomat who was stationed in the Middle East until recently.

Addressing hundreds of Jordanian students who packed the main auditorium of the Economics Department at the University of Jordan, Ortega said that the Sandinista front of Nicaragua was trying to formulate a peace initiative to solve the Gulf crisis.

He did not disclose the elements of the initiative but implied that it was a collective effort exerted by Third World

leaders and other international personalities who are seeking peace in the region.

Following his first visit to Baghdad, Ortega conferred with His Majesty King Hussein, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi and former Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

In his second recent visit to Baghdad, Ortega held a five-hour meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and met with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Ortega, who is accompanied by the former Nicaraguan foreign minister, father Miguel Discotes, is expected to leave for Germany on Wednesday to confer with former German Chancellor Willy Brandt.

The Nicaraguan leader implied that the Gulf initiative would essentially be a compromise compatible with the United Nations Charter.

"We are not in the process of counting votes of who is in favour of Iraq and who is in favour of the United States," he said. "Our efforts aim at formulating an initiative that enhances international law and the United Nations Charter

and is in favour of peace," he told the students.

Ortega said he was encouraged by the positive response by the Iraqis and the other parties to the ideas that have been put forward as part of the projected peace initiative.

Although Ortega, who was opposed by Consecutive American administrations during his ten years in power before stepping down in February 1990, does not have clout in Washington political analysts believe that his role might be instrumental in influencing the course of events in the Gulf.

Ortega appears to be working on two levels: On the one hand he is practically rallying support of the Third World, basically in Latin America, behind Iraq in its confrontation with the West.

On the other hand, he is seeking a settlement which will lay a basis for a commitment from all sides involved to respect international law and conventions. In Ortega's view, such a settlement will be in favour of the Third World

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His Majesty King Hussein, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Yemeni Vice-President Ali Salem Al Beedh meet in Baghdad Tuesday (Petra photo)

Mideast conference a must after Gulf crisis — Dumas

EC to contact Aziz after U.S. talks

PARIS (Agencies) — French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas said Tuesday convening an international conference to reach solutions to all the problems of the Middle East is a must after a solution to the Gulf crisis is found.

In a meeting of the West European Union (WEU) parliamentarians, Dumas said the international community does not want to have a linkage between the Gulf crisis and other problems in the region so that not to give Iraqi President Saddam Hussein any pretext not to withdraw from Kuwait.

In the face of the increase in disputes in this region it will be necessary for the international community to look for a solution to all these problems, he said.

In Brussels, the 12 European Community (EC) countries agreed Tuesday that Italy, current holder of the EC's rotating presidency, could hold talks with Iraq if U.S.-Iraqi meetings proposed by President George Bush take place.

EC foreign ministers agreed that the question of Westerners in

U.S. still awaiting reply

WASHINGTON (R) — The State Department said Tuesday that it was still awaiting formal acceptance by Iraq of a U.S.-proposed exchange of foreign ministerial visits to avert war over Kuwait.

"The ball is in their court," spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler told the regular noon briefing. "They can pick up the option or not. That's their choice."

Tutwiler said no further steps had been taken towards arranging the meetings since the highest ranking U.S. diplomat in Baghdad, Charge d'Affaires Joseph Wilson, met twice with a senior Iraqi Foreign Ministry official at the weekend.

Iraq and Kuwait would top the agenda in any such talks, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told a news conference.

Bush invited Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington and said he would send

Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad for talks with Saddam after winning support for a U.N. Security Council resolution authorising the use of force unless Iraq withdraws from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

Iraq has accepted, and the two sides have agreed that the talks will be bilateral, despite Bush's original suggestion that the ambassadors of Arab countries which have sided with the U.S. over the Gulf crisis should attend the meeting.

"The (EC) presidency would be ready to meet Tariq Aziz on his way back from Washington if that visit materialises," Hurd said.

The meeting would be discussed in advance with Washington, he added.

"There would be no opportunity for the Iraqis to divide us," he said.

Dumas said the 12 countries had agreed that the EC should continue to play an active role in the region after the current crisis subsides.

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Arab ministers in intense Gulf talks

CAIRO (Agencies) — The foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia held a second round of Gulf crisis talks in a Nile-side hotel late Tuesday.

"We discussed the Gulf, the developments in it and everything which can arise from this crisis...," Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid told reporters.

"There are contacts and coordination. Everything is as best as it can be between us three," Abdul Meguid said he expected a third round to talks with his Saudi Arabian and Syrian counterparts — Prince Saud Al Faisal and Farouq Al Sharra — later in the day.

The ministers also held a 90-minute meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak Tuesday.

While no details of their discussions were given, Western diplomats said the three countries must be concerned that U.S. President George Bush had gone over their heads by offering to hold direct talks with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

An Egyptian Foreign Ministry source said Monday the three ministers were discussing coordination of military operations. Sharra said on his arrival in Cairo that they would be discussing the U.S. talks with Iraq.

The Syrian minister told reporters that Damascus, Cairo and Riyadh all welcomed Bush's offer but insisted that U.N. Security Council resolutions be implemented in full.

But Abdul Meguid, when asked on Tuesday if the three ministers expected anything to come out of the U.S.-Iraqi talks, said: "No, we did not discuss this subject."

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PLO income reported halved

CAIRO (R) — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) estimates it has lost \$2 billion in the four months since Iraq invaded Kuwait, Palestinian sources said Tuesday. The sources told Reuters that the PLO's income has been slashed by about 50 per cent since Iraq seized the emirate. The loss of income to Palestinians living in the Israeli-occupied territories and elsewhere and derived from Palestinian businesses and residents in Kuwait was valued at \$1.3 billion so far, the sources said. Kuwait's exiled government has stopped its direct contribution to PLO funds entirely, while Saudi Arabia has reduced its contribution to the PLO's annual running costs. The sources said that before the invasion, the kingdom contributed about \$1 billion a year — about one third of the PLO's running costs. The Palestinian movement as a whole has been hurt by the Gulf crisis in several ways, diplomats said. Apart from direct financial contributions from Gulf Arab states, about half of the 400,000 Palestinians living in Kuwait have fled the emirate since the invasion.

Israel may resume expulsions

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel Radio said Tuesday the occupation authorities were considering resuming expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories, a policy suspended 16 months ago under international pressure.

"The Israeli defence and legal establishments are intensely examining the possibility of more extensive use, of expulsion of Palestinian activists, the radio said.

Israeli sources told Reuters military authorities were considering expulsion orders against 10 Palestinians proposed by adviser to the military commanders of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

They said orders expelling Palestinians to another country could be issued within a few days.

Military authorities have expelled at least 58 Palestinians suspected of activities against Israel since the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising in December 1987.

The policy was suspended last year after criticism from Western Europe and the United States. Israel last expelled Palestinians in August 1989, when five West Bankers were banished.

Israel Radio said Defence Minister Moshe Arens had asked state attorney Dorit Beinisch and the army's legal adviser, Amnon Shashnow, to examine the policy on expulsions.

Arens told the parliamentary foreign affairs and security committee Monday that expulsion of Palestinians may be used in the future.

The talk of fresh expulsions follows Arab-Jewish violence sparked by the Jewish massacre of over 20 Palestinians in Jerusalem on Oct. 8.

Israeli forces Tuesday captured five Arabs identified by local Palestinians as drug smugglers and shot dead a sixth as they put to sea in a fishing boat from the occupied Gaza Strip.

Israeli military officials said the six men looked suspicious as they set out on the Mediterranean towards Egypt around sunset on Monday and they ignored a navy

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Beirut 'green line' is no more

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Army bulldozers smashed through barricades and engineers dismantled mines Tuesday along the "green line" battle zone that had divided Beirut for 15 years.

The Lebanese government, backed by 40,000 Syrian troops, regained control of the capital Monday after the reluctant withdrawal of the last private army, the powerful Lebanese Forces of Maronite Christian leader Samir Geagea.

Dozens of people cheered President Elias Hrawi's soldiers and expressed their relief as four bulldozers destroyed the barriers that had separated the capital communities since 1975.

Army engineers defused and detonated mines and unexploded shells lurking under the rubble and in tall weeds along the 12-kilometre swathe of ruined buildings.

Stray dogs emerged from shell-

shattered buildings, barking furiously as the yellow machine started demolishing an earth embankment that split the embattled sectors of the city.

Martyr's Square and surrounding streets, the former business centre of the capital, were part of no-man's-land that became overgrown with bushes and small trees still sprouting from cracks in pavement.

Two small anti-personnel mines exploded under the bulldozer's chains as it set about its task.

The huge machine was not affected by the small blasts. But a Lebanese army captain ordered the operation discontinued until troops cleared the area of more mines.

Young helmeted soldiers, equipped with long sticks, skimmed the undergrowth. They found and defused about 50 of the beige plastic devices in 15

minutes. As the bulldozer roared into action again, a pack of dogs watching the unfamiliar crowd from an adjacent rise scampered off yelping. Their retreat was accompanied by a third mine blast which the troops set had apparently been set off by one of the dogs.

The army deployed in downtown Beirut Monday in the first phase of a government plan to reunite the capital and end the fighting that has killed more than 150,000 people.

The area around Martyr's Square just north of Beirut port became the scene of some of the most savage battles as rival militias clashed repeatedly for control of the strategic area.

The crumbling facades of the old multi-story buildings fronting on the square are peppered with bullets and shrapnel, their interiors gutted by fire

Bush gives Iraq chance to link Gulf to Palestinians

By Alan Elsner
Reuters

WASHINGTON — President George Bush's offer of direct talks with Iraq has given Baghdad a new opportunity to link the Gulf crisis with the Palestinian problem, a tie-in the United States might find difficult to avoid.

A succession of top Bush administration officials went on television at the weekend, all delivering the same message: that the offer to meet Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz in Washington and send Secretary of State James Baker to Baghdad did not mean the beginning to negotiations and compromises.

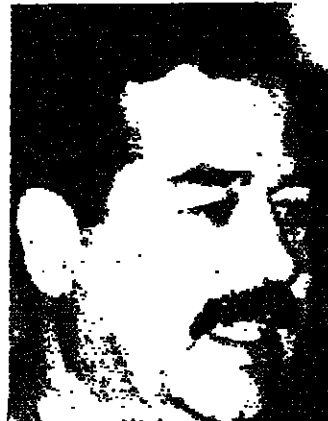
It is not a negotiation. It is not a change of policy. There are going to be talks, there's going to be discussions, but no negotiations beyond what the U.S. has already decided, said Vice-President Dan Quayle.

Baker said the only concession Washington might make would be to assure Iraq it would not be attacked if it withdrew unconditionally from Kuwait.

But such reassurances failed to satisfy such powerful and influential critics as former U.S. secretaries of state Henry Kissinger and Alexander Haig. The Bush gambit, they argued, had let the genie of a partial solution and linkage to the Palestinian problem out of the bottle.

"Above all, it will be perceived as a negotiation by our allies, many of whom, I believe, will now start their own lines to Baghdad. And I think it will be very difficult to hold the coalition together," said Kissinger.

Adam Garfinkel, a Mideast analyst with the Foreign Policy Research Institute, said the United States might be walking into an Iraqi trap in which



Saddam Hussein

it would become enmeshed in protracted talks that promised success but never quite delivered it.

"Once you start talking with the enemy, it changes everything. By opening this sequence, the Bush administration has put itself at the mercy of Iraqi intentions," he said.

Haig was even more critical, saying: "Iraq is going to play the United States like a flute, and this is just beginning to unfold," he said.

"Already the outlines of a deal are being cobbled together — an assurance that we won't go into Iraq if it withdraws, and possibly the introduction of the Palestinian question into the talks," he said.

Baghdad's strategy in the talks, which are expected to take place before Jan. 15 — when the United Nations resolution authorising the use of force takes effect — is already clear.

Iraq's ambassador to Washington and the United Nations both made it clear at the weekend that Iraq would try to bring the Palestinian issue into the equation.

"Now, we are going to negotiate with each other,"



George Bush

said the Iraqi envoy in Washington, Mohammad Al Mashat.

"We are going to discuss all aspects of the Gulf crisis. We'll discuss all aspects of the Middle East as well as because all of the problems there are connected with each other, and we are aspiring for a complete, comprehensive peace for all outstanding problems in the area," he said.

Already, the United States faces a difficult choice at the U.N. Security Council where another resolution critical of Iraq is about to come to a vote within the next few days.

Does Washington veto the resolution, and risk alienating its Arab allies, or allow it to pass and cause a new rift in its relations with Iraq?

Baker has always promised a new effort to solve the Palestinian issue once the Gulf crisis is satisfactorily resolved. The problem is whether or not an explicit link to the Gulf crisis is created.

"What Saddam Hussein has in mind is to try to convert this into an Arab-Israeli war, and it would be the greatest concession to him to go along with that kind of a suggestion," said former U.S. Middle East negotiator Sol Linowitz.

Cheney, Powell fail to sway Democrats

WASHINGTON (AP) — By repeatedly urging President George Bush to stick with the economic embargo against Iraq, Senate Democrats are rejecting the administration's bleak assessment of the sanctions' effectiveness.

Sen. Sam Nunn made the point repeatedly during five days of hearings that he engineered as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. Day after day, former U.S. Defense officials urged the White House to give the sanctions more time — bolstering the Democratic challenge to Bush's strategy.

When two current officials — Defense Secretary Dick Cheney and Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff — finally testified Monday, Nunn asked them if the administration was dismissing sanctions too easily.

"If we go to war, we never will know whether they would have worked," said the Georgia Democrat, who has criticised the president's decision to increase the number of U.S. troops in the region to more than 440,000.

Cheney and Powell struck a pessimistic tone, saying that Iraq could survive the international sanctions imposed after its forces invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2.

They also used their appearances before the panel to try to stem the tide of congressional discontent over Bush's conduct.

"Given the nature of the regime, given Saddam Hussein's brutality to his own people, his very tight control of that society, his ability to allocate resources for the military, their ability to produce their own food... he can ride them out," Cheney said.

The ranking Republican on the Armed Services Committee, Sen. John Warner of Virginia, said in an interview later in the day that Cheney and Powell "put in balance clearly the testimony of the witnesses of the previous week."

The testimony last week from the likes of retired Adm. William Crowe, a former chairman of the

joint chiefs, and Reagan administration Navy Secretary James Webb bolstered the Democratic challenge to Bush's policy.

Crowe and another former joint chiefs of staff chairman, retired air force Gen. David C. Jones, said Bush should give sanctions a year to 18 months to take effect before resorting to military force.

Webb took a harsher tone, contending that Bush blundered in sending 200,000 additional troops to the Gulf region and should not compound the error by launching a military strike.

Democrats were not deterred by Cheney or Powell's testimony nor by the United Nations Security Council's authorisation of military force against Iraq if Kuwait is not freed by Jan. 15.

Nor did they take comfort in Bush's announcement last Friday that he will send Secretary of State James Baker to Iraq to meet with Saddam before that date.

"We should be patient in applying military force... we should give sanctions an opportunity to weaken Saddam Hussein so that if it becomes necessary to use the option of military force, we will have perhaps saved some lives of American boys," said Sen. Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia.

Former U.S. Defense Secretary Robert McNamara testified Tuesday that the United States should apply a lesson of Vietnam to the Gulf crisis: No president should go to war without the approval of the American people.

McNamara was testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when asked to compare the situation with U.S. involvement in Vietnam, when he headed the Defense Department.

"I do not believe the president should — and I do not believe he will — initiate action without the approval of the American people expressed by the approval of the Congress," he said.

Republican Sen. Larry Pressler of South Dakota said Americans want peace.

Somali political talks to go ahead despite violence

CAIRO (Agencies) — Talks on reforming Somalia's political system will go ahead despite recent clashes in the Somali capital, according to Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdul Meguid.

The talks with opposition groups are aimed at ending a rebellion against the government.

"There will be a meeting very soon in Cairo," Abdul Meguid told Reuters after talks with Somali Foreign Minister Ahmad Mohammad Aden and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal.

"We hope this will lead to stability and calm the situation down in Somalia," he said, confirming the talks would go ahead as planned on Dec. 11.

Witnesses in the Somali capital Mogadishu Monday reported having seen several bodies lying in the market place and in nearby streets since rival clans began fighting with machine guns and hand grenades Thursday.

They said troops were moving in to try to stop the fighting.

The Abgal clan claimed that members of the Galgalo clan had been killing them with weapons supplied by the government of President Mohammad Siad Barre.

The Abgal are part of the Hawiye tribe which forms the backbone of the United Somali Congress (USC) fighting to topple Siad Barre, who has ruled the country since 1969.

The USC and another rebel group, the Somali National Movement (SNM), control much of Somalia. The fighting has caused some 400,000 Somalis to flee their impoverished country in the Horn of Africa to neighbouring Ethiopia.

When asked if all five opposition groups invited to the talks had agreed to attend, Abdul Meguid said: "I don't want to talk about numbers. All rebel parties will be involved."

Asked specifically about attendance of the SNM, the country's main rebel group, he said the situation was still not clear.

Somalia has promised to send a high-level representative to the talks, which will also be attended by Egypt and Somalia's former colonial administrator Italy.

Somalia's major Western aid donors have pressed it to carry out political reforms following allegations of human rights violations.

Somalia announces rewards The Somali government has put part of its armed forces on alert and offered cash awards to citizens assisting in the arrests of rebels.

The measures were announced by Prime Minister Hawadle Madar Mohammad.

Madar Mohammad did not specify what part of the armed forces had been put on alert, but he called on civilians to join the troops to help stop the fighting.

He offered two million shillings (\$832) to citizens involved in the arrest of "bandits" and between one million (\$416) and 10 million shillings (\$4,160) to anyone wounded in fighting.

The government also offered to buy firearms from citizens and warned it would "deal severely" with those caught with unlicensed guns, said Madar Mohammad.

He said armed groups in recent days had been "wreaking havoc" in the capital Mogadishu and other districts, according to the broadcast.

Iran's war veterans say Iraqi forces tough

TEHRAN (AP) — Iranian veterans of the 1980-88 war with Iraq say the Americans and their allies cannot expect a short, quick war if they attack to liberate Kuwait.

"The Iraqis can take a great number of casualties and continue to fight over the corpses of their dead," cautioned Colonel Amir, an infantryman who fought in most of the major battles of the Gulf war. Amir refused to be further identified.

"If they want to fight the Iraqis, the Americans are going to have to stomach death," he said in an interview.

"Most Iraqi soldiers have eight years of real war experience. The young Americans sent to fight have never seen a battle front, never killed or been near death," he said.

Some U.S. soldiers in the Gulf fought in Panama and Grenada, both quick campaigns.

By conservative Western count, there were one million casualties on both sides during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. The war ended with a cease-fire in 1988, but peace talks dragged on until Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, apparently eager to pacify one front as multinational troops were deployed in response to his invasion of Kuwait, made peace with Iran.

Iran has condemned Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait, but been equally harsh in its criticism of the U.S.-led deployment of foreign soldiers to the Gulf region.

The Iranians, hard hit by an arms embargo throughout the Gulf war, had to rely on massed infantry attacks with little armour and artillery and virtually no air cover.

The Americans and their allies will wage a different kind of war, pitting their firepower and electronic expertise against Iraq's numerical strength.

The United States plans to have 430,000 troops in the Gulf by January. A total of about 150,000 troops were sent by 27 other nations.

Iraq has an estimated 220,000 troops in Kuwait and another 230,000 in southern Iraq near the Kuwait border. It has said 250,000 more men will be sent to Kuwait, a deployment U.S. experts say could take a month.

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati, chief of intelligence for the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps during the war, warned: "The Americans will lose on the ground because they don't have enough troops. I doubt they'll be able to push Iraq out of Kuwait."

He acknowledged that the Americans will control the skies. "But air power can be used only to support ground forces. It doesn't win wars on its own."

Alireza, a wartime intelligence officer, said the Iraqis' chemical weapons were "their cutting edge."

"They could wipe out large numbers of troops at a time," said Alireza, who refused to be further identified.

If war breaks out, it would be fought on a desert terrain with which the Iraqis are familiar, Alireza said.

The Americans "have some elite units who've practised desert warfare. Iraq has tens of thousands of soldiers who've actually fought under those conditions," he said.

"If the Americans think they can fight a short, quick war, they're wrong," he said.

Dubai arms show to start in Gulf — Iraq not welcome

DUBAI (R) — Warplanes and weapons ranged against each other in the Gulf will line up in competition in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) next month when the region's biggest arms show opens its doors to all but Iraq.

Soviet-made aircraft, including helicopter gunships similar to ones owned by Iraq, and American and European fighters, the same as those now deployed with anti-Iraqi forces in the Gulf, will rub wings at the show in Dubai.

Iraq, with a million-strong army and more than 5,000 tanks, will not be welcome as a buyer or seller of arms.

"They haven't been invited," said an exhibition official in the UAE, whose troops would assist any allied push to oust Iraq from Kuwait.

Organisers say despite, or perhaps because of, the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or face war, world weapons manufacturers are queuing up to display their wares.

Fears of an allied counter-invasion of Kuwait, higher up the strategic waterway, does not appear to have put them off the Dubai '91 International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition.

With global arms markets shrinking following the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, almost 300 firms from 40 countries, double the number at last year's show, will display in the volatile Gulf.

"A lot of the manufacturers say they expect to sell more arms because of the tension here," Sheikh Ahmad Bin Saeed Al Maktum, head of the Dubai civil aviation authority which backs the annual event, said in a recent interview.

Virginia Kern of the London-

based Fairs and Exhibitions Limited said an estimated 20,000 potential buyers would visit the show which runs from Jan. 27-31 — during the second week of the allies' window for war against Iraq.

"The organisers say they hope the Soviet Union — exhibiting in Dubai for the first time — will put its state-of-the-art MIG-31 Foxhound on show."

The MIG-31 is not yet confirmed but they have said they will be bringing the MI-28 Havoc combat helicopter," said an organiser.

The two aircraft were developed to combat Western weapon systems deployed by NATO in Europe but the end of the cold war in Europe means they are looking for new markets.

American giants Lockheed, Boeing, General Dynamics and McDonnell Douglas will exhibit, along with West European manufacturers.

Salesmen from China's state weapons firms — which supplied surface-to-surface missiles to Iran during the 1980-88 Gulf war — will also be there.

If the MIG-31 flies at Dubai, viewers will be able to compare it with General Dynamics' sophisticated FA-18 Hornet, which is also expected to be put through its paces.

Kuwait had Hornets on order at the time of the Iraqi invasion. Heavy weapons will be on view and defensive systems, including protection against nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, are also expected to be on show.

European manufacturers of protective equipment and clothing have reported unprecedented interest because of the threat posed by Iraq's arsenal of chemical weapons.

Other flights (Terminal 2)

18:55 Bahrain (TK)
20:25 Suva (LH)
21:55 Karachi (PK)

MARKET PRICES

Upstower price in lbs per kg

Apple 600 / 500
Banana 500 / 450
Banana (Mukammar) 450 / 400
Beans 280 / 180
Cabbage 120 / 80
Cauliflower 240 / 180
Corn 200 / 150
Cucumbers (large) 150 / 80
Cucumbers (small) 320 / 280
Dates 300 / 400
Eggplant 180 / 150
Figs 300 / 300
Garlic 1400 / 1000
Grapes 600 / 500
Lemon 170 / 120
Mallow 180 / 120
Marrow (large) 100 / 50
Marrow (small) 220 / 180
Onion (dry) 240 / 200
Onion (green) 220 / 180
Okra 600 / 500
Orange 340 / 200
Pepper (hot) 220 / 180
Pepper (sweet) 120 / 80
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Radicchio 200 / 150
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His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent Tuesday receives a Kuwaiti popular delegation (Petra photo)

Regent receives Kuwaiti delegation

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan the Regent Tuesday met with a Kuwaiti popular delegation currently on a visit to Jordan as part of a tour of several Arab countries.

Prince Hassan briefed the delegation on the efforts Jordan has made before and after the onset of the Gulf crisis to ensure an Arab settlement to the crisis and prevent any complications that might arise as a result of its escalation.

The Kuwaiti delegation praised the efforts made by His Majesty King Hussein to solve the crisis peacefully and voiced conviction that Jordan could play an important role in finding a formula capable of ensuring an honourable solution to the crisis and in averting an eventual catastrophe if war was to break out.

Also Tuesday, Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Abdul Latif Arabiyat received

the delegation and reviewed with them the Gulf crisis.

Arabiyat warned that consequences of any hostilities against Iraq would not only pose danger to Iraq but to the whole Arab Nation.

He stressed that expanding the base of dialogue and negotiations within an Arab context would add to the strength of the Arab Nation and would enable it to "thwart this summer doom from the Arab skies."

The delegation members landed Jordan's pan-Arab stand and voiced pride in His Majesty King Hussein's honourable stand. It also stressed that if "there is any glimmer of hope for solving the Gulf crisis, then it should be through King Hussein."

The Kuwaiti delegation will be holding a press conference at the Plaza Hotel this morning before departing Amman to resume their tour of a number of Arab capitals.

Signs of thaw seen in Jordanian-Saudi relations

By Ghadeer Taber
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — In what appears to be an improvement in Saudi-Jordanian relations, Jordan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia has received an entry visa to the Kingdom but he denies being told to return to his post.

"No one has asked me to return to Saudi Arabia," Ambassador Naser Al Batayneh said Tuesday. But he refused to comment on why he had applied and received a Saudi entry visa from the Saudi Embassy in Amman.

Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Mutassem Bilbeisi confirmed that the ambassador, who was recalled nearly three months ago, had received an entry visa but said that there had been no decision as to when he will return to the Saudi capital.

"It is just an entry visa. There has been no decision yet," Bilbeisi told the Jordan Times. "We hope relations will improve and (whatever the situation) it always helps to

have an ambassador (in Riyadh)," he said.

Relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia were strained after Amman criticised the presence of foreign forces in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, and Jordanian popular sentiments heavily in support of Iraq in the Gulf standoff emerged.

In retaliation, Riyadh cut oil supplies to the Kingdom, banned Jordanian produce and expelled Jordanians working there. Saudi Arabia also stopped issuing entry visas to Jordanians and complicated procedures for renewing work and residency permits for Jordanian expatriates.

Batayneh was recalled in protest at Riyadh's decision to close the military, culture and labour sections at the embassy and cut the number of Jordanian diplomats to 10.

Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to Jordan Sheikh Mohammad Fahd Al Issa was also recalled shortly after Batayneh returned and the Saudi embassy reduced its diplomatic staff to 10.

Saudi Charge D'affaires

Abdul Rahman Al Nasser refused to comment on Batayneh's visa or on whether the Saudi ambassador would return to Amman.

His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and senior officials have repeatedly said that differences over approaches to a solution to the Gulf crisis should not strain relations between Arab countries.

Analysts see an improvement in relations, especially after King Hussein visited Oman, who currently heads the Gulf Cooperation Council. Oman is believed to be playing a role in the improvement of ties.

Yousef Ben Alawi, the Omani minister of state for foreign affairs, visited Amman last month and delivered a message from Sultan Qaboos Bin Sai'd to King Hussein. In remarks to the media, the envoy strongly refused suggestions that Jordan and Oman were planning a Gulf peace initiative. The refusal gave rise to speculation that Oman was playing a role in efforts to improve relations between Jordan and the Gulf Arab states.

Chamber of Commerce board of directors elected

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The newly elected board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce was confirmed Tuesday with Haydar Murad, from Al Amal group, gathering a total 1,992 votes, followed closely by Ghassan Khirfan (Al Taawun) with 1,978 votes. Gathering 1,916 votes was Mohammad Mohaseb (Al Amal). Mohammad Asfour came fourth with 1,743 followed by Mohammad Haj-Deeb (Al Taawun) with 1,711 votes. Coming in next was Riad Sayfi (Al Amal) with 1,687 votes, followed by Yousef Sardi (Al Amal) in seventh place with a total of 1,560 votes. Ismail Tarairah (Al Amal) gathered 1,542 votes while Ma'moun Toukan (Al Taawun) had 1,492 votes. In tenth place was Salim Khirfan (Al Amal) totalling 1,467 votes, followed by Mohammad Himsy (Al Taawun) with 1,410 votes, the twelfth candidate, Walid Khatib (Al Taawun) scored 1,409 votes.

Out of the twelve new directors of the board previous members are Haydar Murad, Mohammad Asfour, Mohammad Haj-Deeb, Riad Sayfi, Yousef Sardi, Salim Khirfan and Mohammad Himsy; the rest are new members.

Voting began Monday for the 12-member board of directors with what appeared to be a large turnout. While the voters were waiting the news with mounting

eagerness, the count went through the entire night until 9:00 a.m. the following day.

The Al Amal coalition won the biggest support with seven of its members elected, while five members of Al-Taawun group winning seats on the four-year-term board of directors.

The Islamic group and the independents did not make it on the board.

"Now that the board of directors has been formed, within the coming two days, the board will elect its chairman from the 12 new candidates," said former chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Mohammad Asfour.

"We want to aim at selling the national products and to expand worldwide," he said adding that "we would like to enhance the economic situation as it has been in turmoil, especially after the devaluation of the dinar, through building bridges and channels between the private sector on the one hand and the government and Parliament on the other hand."

Asfour affirmed that "we will see to it that great coordination will take place between all the private sectors that are considered pillars of the national economy."

He also explained that the tourism and agricultural sectors would be closely monitored and

helped. Asfour said he felt there were many things that needed to be worked on. "When I was chairman, we started many projects that are beneficial to the country and that are not yet finished. We would like to continue."

He cited examples such as the World Trade Centre and some laws that were being studied together with certain committees. "We feel the job is not finished and therefore if we continue, we will be contributing a lot to the trade family," Asfour said.

The voting, which was monitored by the Supervising and Counting Committees, also enjoyed the company of some 4,374 people who had voted (out of a total of 17,165).

The voters expressed their satisfaction with the procedure saying it is "very democratic."

Although the rooms were overcrowded and smoke-filled, people did not seem to mind, but a young man who voted said: "It would have been more efficient if the votes were counted through a computer."

On the whole, however, the atmosphere was "good" and "smooth," as many insiders were heard saying, though at times it was intense because some of the candidates came very close in terms of vote counts.

Government replies to queries on ministries

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament Wednesday (today) stems to the government's replies to a number of queries relevant to the ministries of aw-qaf, industry and trade, tourism and education.

At the meeting, to be attended by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and the Cabinet ministers, the House will also hear the prime minister's letter of referral of the banking law for the year 1990 to the House.

The House's legal, administrative, education and foreign affairs committees will also hold separate meetings to discuss various issues on their agenda.

The financial committee will also meet under the chairmanship of Abdullah Nsour to discuss the budget draft law for 1991. The committee met Tuesday and finished the first reading of the government's revenues.

In the meantime the House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat called on the House's committees to work out plans of actions in accordance with priorities.

Arabiyat noted that the roles of permanent and temporary committees had been defined and that the council would set up a legal office to give advice on legal issues.

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PRINCE HASSAN RECEIVES NAKA-JIMA: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday received the World Health Organisation (WHO) Director General Hiroshi Nakajima and the delegation accompanying him. Prince Hassan and the U.N. officials discussed scopes of cooperation between Jordan and WHO within the context of the regional plan being implemented by the organisation in the Eastern Mediterranean countries. The meeting was attended by Health Minister Mohammad Addoub Al Zaben and Interior Ministry Secretary-General Salameh Hamad. On the WHO side it was attended by Hussein Jezairi, WHO regional director for the Eastern Mediterranean, and senior WHO officials.

Arabiyat tours Tafleeh agricultural projects, pledges help to farmers

TAFILEH (J.T.) — Minister of Agriculture Suleiman Arabiyat Tuesday made a field tour of the Tafleeh Governorate, inspecting agricultural projects and talking to farmers and ministry officials working in Tafleeh.

"A plan has been worked out by a joint team representing the ministry and the government-appointed Food Security Committee on utilising state-owned land for the production of wheat, barley and animal feed," said the minister during his tour.

Jordan, he added, is suffering acutely from shortage of cereals and the government is exerting all possible efforts to increase grain production and reduce the Kingdom's reliance on foreign sources.

The ministry's aim in leasing state-owned land for nominal fees is to increase cereal production and at the same time find work for many job-seekers.

The minister lauded the work of a local drought committee which has been conducting maintenance work on water springs and canals and planting forest and fruit trees.

At the outset of the tour, Arabiyat heard a briefing by the Tafleeh governor about the governorate's needs of agricultural services and water supplies as well as veterinary drugs.

Accompanied by Minister of Youth Ibrahim Al Ghababshah and French ambassador to Jordan, the minister of agriculture toured Al Tuwaneh and Al Hasan agricultural stations and a nursery for reproducing forest tree saplings for the Tafleeh Governorate.

Arabiyat's tour followed a statement to the local journalists about the general agricultural conditions in Jordan and the ministry's plans to address the damages done to the farmers by the Gulf crisis.

Jordan's direct losses in agriculture, resulting from the Gulf crisis, are estimated at JD 105 million annually and these are incurred mainly because the Saudi Arabian markets have been closed to Jordan's products, according to Arabiyat.

The Jordanian government is currently trying to contact the Saudi authorities for reopening their markets to Jordanian products, but so far it has received no favourable reply, the minister said during a meeting with Jordanian journalists at the Jordan News Agency, Petra, headquarters in Amman.

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Apart from direct losses Jordan has incurred indirect losses as a result of this crisis and this is represented in the loss of transportation business for more than 400 Jordanian trucks, which used to carry the products to Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries, the increase in the price of farm equipment and fertilisers, as certain countries have banned such shipments to Jordan, and the failure of farmers and exporters to honour their financial commitments, the minister pointed out.

"We did not establish intensive agricultural production of cucumbers, tomatoes, marrows and other products in the Jordan Valley for the consumption of Jordanians alone, but plans had been made to export the products to the Arab region which had formed a very good market for Jordan over the past years," said Arabiyat.

He said that Jordan had built up its agricultural policies on the basis of ensuring an integrated pan-Arab food security.

Asked about steps taken by the government to reduce the adverse effects of the crisis on farmers, Arabiyat said that his ministry had adopted an emergency plan in cooperation with the Food Security Committee. The plan, he said, is based on the full utilisation of available land, water resources and pastures for the production of cereals, especially wheat, barley and animal feed as well as potatoes, garlic and onion which is in great demand on the local market.

"The production of these commodities will ensure income for the farmers and is bound to reduce Jordan's dependence on foreign imports, for which it used to pay in hard currency," the minister explained.

Arabiyat said that the government had allowed farmers to use state-owned land to produce cereals and was offering to buy wheat at JD 147 a tonne and barley at JD 115 a tonne, higher than the international rates, in order to encourage production.

As a first step, the minister said, 30,000 dunums of land in the Jordan Valley are now being cultivated with wheat and barley, but other lands will be leased for the purpose. A second project will be in the southern regions where 44,000 dunums of land will be grown with wheat and barley to produce at least 30,000 tonnes of grain annually, the minister said.

"The Ministry of Agriculture is

also encouraging food production in the backyards of homes where people can keep poultry, cattle and sheep and breed bees. This project is being financed through a special government fund which offers interest-free loans to people to buy implements and to develop lands," the minister pointed out.

To help reduce the losses this year, the Jordan Agricultural Marketing and Processing Company (JAMPCO) has bought 70,000 tonnes of tomatoes for processing into tomato paste, the company is buying a large part of the citrus fruits for processing, and will set up a new tomato processing plant in the northern badia region and a dairy plant in the Irbid Governorate, the minister said.

"In addition, the ministry is now striving to open new markets for Jordanian products in Arab and foreign countries," the minister said.

A total of JD 6.5 million has been allocated from the 1991 budget for the purchase of equipment, fertilisers and other requirements to be used in the development of state-owned land," Arabiyat said. He said that part of the money will be used for setting up dams, the ministry's budget includes JD 10 million to be used for current expenditure on projects and to subsidise the purchase of grain.

Arabiyat said that the local farmers were indebted by a total of JD 40 million to three money lending institutions: the Agricultural Credit Corporation, the Jordan Cooperative Organisation and the Jordan Farmers Association. "It is not possible to write off the debts because these institutions have their own commitments and they will have to pay the loans to the government or to the foreign creditors."

He said that the three institutions were willing to reschedule the debts to make it easier for the farmers to pay back their dues.

Referring to products that come to Jordan from the occupied Palestinian land, the minister said that a special committee had been coordinating matters in this regard, and "products from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had been continuously finding their way to Jordan and the neighbouring Arab states."

Arabiyat announced that his ministry had made sufficient money available for the Hammad basin project near the Iraqi, Saudi and Syrian borders.

British women defy government, go to Baghdad to obtain release of relatives

By Debbie Lovatt
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Thirty determined British women are gathering in Amman to visit Baghdad, in defiance of their government's advice, to secure the release of their loved ones who are held back in Iraq as detainees against attack.

"Let us bring our husbands, fathers and sons home for Christmas," is the objective of the group, said Gilly Battersby of Lincoln, whose husband Peter, an engineer, is among the hundreds of foreigners who are held at Iraqi strategic sites.

Battersby herself was one of the thousands of 'guests of Iraq' until September when she flew out of Baghdad after the Iraqi government allowed all European, American and Japanese women and children to leave.

Nine British women, who are following in the footsteps of 10 of their compatriots who secured the release of their husbands, brothers and sons with a visit to Baghdad last month, arrived here Monday led by Battersby. The group is waiting for another 21 women to join them before flying to the Iraqi capital Wednesday.

At least 16 of the women had been permanent residents of Kuwait and, like Battersby, flew out in September. They are now

returning with the hope that their direct intervention would be able to secure the release of their relatives.

"The children need their fathers, the wives need their husbands," Battersby said.

The whereabouts of their relatives is known, but all have had telephone contact for the past three months. The women have three-month visas but are hopeful that the Ministry of Information will take them to their loved ones and allow them to leave together in time for Christmas.

The group was bitter about the lack of help from the British authorities. "The government did not help us at all," said Battersby. "On the contrary they tried to discourage us from going to Baghdad."

Margaret Fowler of Inverness, Scotland, told how she had to sell possessions in order to raise the money needed to cover the expensive trip.

The women were very tense and particularly worried about their children left in Britain. "Many of the children who were in Kuwait for their summer holidays at the time of the invasion are so traumatised that they have been on tranquillisers since then," said Fowler.

The women, who are carrying with them tins of powdered milk for babies as well as Christmas

gifts, have no guarantee of returning with their husbands or of meeting with the Iraqi president.

The Iraqi ambassador in London is "hoping that we will get a meeting with Saddam Hussein," said Battersby.

"The British government has let us down terribly; we're going on our own...to try to sort our own problems out over there. We cannot rely on the British government and the British embassy," Battersby told the Jordan Times. In contrast, she said, the Iraqi embassy helped the group. "He (the ambassador) has been excellent. He's been very helpful."

The group wants negotiations. "No blood in 1991. Talk peace." They were pleased that Edward Heath, a former British prime minister, and Tony Benn, a Labour Member of Parliament, had ignored the government's advice, and visited Iraq and secured the release of many British nationals.

"They don't want us to go but we're not taking any notice of the British government any more," Battersby said.

The government told the women not to go but gave no reason except to say that they are "going against the government."

The group is expecting no help from the British embassy in Baghdad, "and we're not even going to ask for it."

Jordan honours Ortega

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday reviewed with the visiting former Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega the Gulf crisis and its reflections on the world countries, as well as Jordan's role in finding a peaceful settlement to it.

Prince Hassan also reviewed with him the Palestine question and its dimensions.

The Crown Prince decorated Ortega with Jordan's Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order, which His Majesty King Hussein had conferred upon him.



Fayzeh Ahmad Ismail

Woman martyred by Israeli soldiers

AMMAN — The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine distributed this photograph of the late Fayzeh Ahmad Ismail Mafarjeh who was shot and killed by Israeli troops Saturday as she tried to stop a policeman near Jerusalem's old city.

Fayzeh, who was born in the village of Liqya in 1962, had been working for the front since 1986.

Cabinet approves delegation to Rabat trade talks

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday took a decision approving the formation of the Jordanian delegation to the meetings of the Jordanian Tunisian and the Jordanian Moroccan trade committees, which will be held in Tunis and Rabat on Dec. 9 and Dec. 13 respectively.

The Jordanian delegation will be headed by Industry and Trade Minister Ziad Fariz and will group director of the Industrial Development and Investment Promotion Department, director of the Economic Cooperation and Exports Promotion Department, representatives of the Central Bank of Jordan, Federation of the Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, and director general of the Jordanian Trade Centres Corporation.

The meetings will discuss means of increasing the volume of commercial exchanges.

The Cabinet also approved minutes of the Joint Jordanian Soviet Committee, which was held here in October. The meeting focussed on means of enhancing scopes of cooperation in all fields.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of 39 paintings by Iraqi artist Haimat Muhammad Ali at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery (10 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
- ★ Exhibition of British archaeological projects in Jordan at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Palestinian embroidery at the Royal Cultural Centre.

DIALOGUE

- Dialogue via satellite on "Government Support for Science and Technology" at the American Centre 3:00 p.m.

LECTURES

- Lecture entitled "Work and Revolution in the Arab Theatre" by Dr. Abdul Latif Agel at the Royal Cultural Centre 6:00 p.m.
- Lecture, in French, entitled "Que le feu soit... et la cuisine fut" by Madame Flavie Romero at the French Cultural Centre 6:00 p.m.

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Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975

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Alternative to diplomacy

THE KUWAITI popular delegations touring various Arab capitals can perform an important role in bridging the gap between the two Arab camps on the Kuwaiti conflict. With official Arab diplomacy on the Gulf crisis on hold, the Kuwaiti delegation can act as a catalyst to fill the vacuum created by such frozen inter-Arab contacts on the grave crisis facing our world. If there is anything missing in this honourable mission it is the absence of Baghdad on the list of Arab capitals that the Kuwaiti delegations intend to visit. As the genesis of the conflict between Iraq and Kuwait can be traced to official disputes between the two countries, involving the people of Kuwait in the search for an equitable settlement between the two sides can go a long way to defuse the crisis.

With even Washington seeking to talk with Baghdad, there can be no justification whatsoever why the pro-U.S. Arab camp should continue to shun negotiating with Iraq. The first U.N. Security Council resolution on the Kuwaiti conflict called for such a dialogue between Kuwait and Iraq and that international request is still binding on both parties. The Kuwaiti popular delegation, like the one visiting Jordan now and others which are going elsewhere, can play the catalyst role of bringing other Arab governments to the negotiating table with the Iraqi side and a visit to Baghdad would provide the very opportunity needed to realise that goal.

This leads one to conclude that there are hardly any disputes or conflicts between the Arab peoples wherever they may be. All existing Arab conflicts are first and foremost among governments and leaderships. The more the Arab peoples take their destinies into their own hands, the faster and more effective would be the opportunities to resolve them. In the final analysis, it is the absence of operational democracy in the Arab World that is at the root of the continuing inter-Arab conflicts and disputes. Seen against this background, the symbolic significance of the ongoing Kuwaiti popular delegations' visits to several Arab countries goes beyond the immediate question of Kuwait and the brewing Gulf crisis. It touches on the heart of the matter in the Arab Order and the need to accelerate the process of awarding the Arab peoples the right and opportunity to speak out on the main issues affecting their lives and future.

Here in Jordan the Kuwaiti team's talks with His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday and Tuesday also offered another valuable occasion to understand the true position of Jordan on the Gulf crisis. Unlike some Kuwaiti officials who went as far as professing willingness to devastate even their own country in order to take it back Jordan has called for the restoration of legitimacy to Kuwait and Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait in a sane manner and within an Arab context. Moreover, Amman's position against the presence of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia and in favour of Kuwaiti sovereignty and territorial integrity are clearly not mutually exclusive. We do hope that our Kuwaiti brothers did get the right message from their visit here. Simply put, it is that only a peaceful solution for the Gulf crisis will do. War, our Kuwaiti brothers have to understand, is a totally unacceptable option as far as we are concerned.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i daily Tuesday reminded readers that America's deployment of forces in the Gulf was not intended as a means of evicting the Iraqis from Kuwait nor for restoring Al Sabah family to their rule, but rather to destroy an Arab country and liquidate the Iraqi military might. America's intentions, which the Arabs realised right from the start, were openly revealed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker when he announced that the only reward to Iraq is to save it from an American military strike, if Baghdad accepts a dialogue with Washington which could settle the problem the paper noted. Indeed Washington's plans to strike the Iraqi military force and offer a good service to Israel started at the moment the Iran-Iraq war ended, with Iraqi forces coming out victorious, the paper stressed. It said that Washington achieved part of its objectives by occupying the oil fields, by intimidating the Arab Gulf states, and by deploying its forces on Arab land, but it also displayed its underhand dealings to the whole world. Furthermore, the paper noted, President Bush has now announced Washington's desire to open a dialogue with Baghdad regardless of the international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council Resolution 660 which calls for a direct Iraq-Kuwait dialogue to solve the issue. Washington has also been keen on preventing France and the Soviet Union and also the Arab League from succeeding in their own initiatives to find a peaceful settlement to the Gulf crisis, and so it was quick to declare that it won't attack Iraq if it accepts the principle of withdrawal from Kuwait, the paper noted. It said that it is now hoped that the international community would realise the dimensions of the American conspiracy against an Arab country and it is hoped that the Arabs who had supported Washington in its scheme would finally realise the danger, and adopt a different attitude.

Once again the opportunity presents itself to the Arab states to assume their role of settling the Gulf crisis in the light of the new developments and in the wake of President Bush's initiative to open a dialogue with Iraq, says a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. Abdul Rahim Omar believes that the margin of hope for peace is gradually widening now and the chances of war are almost equal to those of peace, thus opening the door for the Arab leaders to make a move towards settling the Arab Gulf issue. Of course such prospects are not to the taste of the Israelis who had hoped that a war in the Gulf would destroy Arab military might. But if that is Israel's attitude, it should not be copied by Arab leaders, because a Muslim leader must by no means copy the attitude of an enemy and turn against another Arab leader and instigate the United States to launch war on Iraq, the writer stresses.

Ecopolitical Forum

Bush's initiative: Countdown to peace or war

STRANGE enough, the international markets (of oil, money and stocks in particular) reacted pretty calmly to Security Council Resolution 678 which authorised the use of force against Iraq and to the absolute rejection of the resolution by Iraq. They should not; the only plausible explanation to this reaction is that the markets were already tipped, one way or another, of the peace trends underlying the highly charged world atmosphere and the very tense international relations. However, the war "ultimatum" implicit in the resolution has 45 days to expire and this is quite a long period; the markets still have plenty of time to react forcefully. And react they will if the diplomatic option does not start to work soon.

When he announced his overture to open talks with Iraq, Mr. Bush started, for the first time since Aug. 2, to act like a statesman rather than the arrogant emperor of the world, (if his overture was made in good faith which is not a small "if"). Mr. Bush's gravest mistake or miscalculation was his continuous insistence on the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait. Such withdrawal is worse than a complete military defeat in the battlefield and no leader would accept it, least of all one of the calibre of President Saddam.

Besides, the stipulation of unconditional withdrawal ignores the fact that there has been a dispute and there were causes which made it burst into the form of violent confrontation and military occupation. Unconditional withdrawal means leaving the reasons behind the dispute intact. If Mr. Bush were in President Saddam's

boots, he would not withdraw unconditionally and would shrug off any threats of war, be they real or otherwise, not excluding Resolution 678.

Mr. Bush's initiative is as very good reason to celebrate. But wait a minute! If the American president wants only to reiterate his unconditional withdrawal through other means, personally to Tariq Aziz and indirectly through James Baker, his initiative will be a waste of time and effort and, practically, a countdown to war. The American president has already spoken his mind out very loudly and repeatedly on this bizarre issue of unconditional withdrawal, but so has President Saddam. There is no noble point in one additional replay.

It is only when Mr. Bush discharges his load of the unconditional clause and of the desire to "punish" President Saddam and when he abandons that most unproductive idea of "no reward for the aggressor" that his initiative will be a real countdown to peace. What is at stake is the world and regional peace. The question now is not basically one of aggression and aggressors.

The so-called invasion of Kuwait was a violent manifestation of a dispute which was not addressed properly. And no matter whose mistake that was in the past, the overriding concern in the present must be to remedy the root causes of that conflict. This will have to be done by negotiations if the solution is not to be self-defeating. And self-defeating a military option will be, simply because, as everybody knows, it will create many more problems than it may solve. To quote His Royal Highness Crown Prince

Hassan "war would unleash hatreds that would extend well beyond the Arab-Israeli syndrome and irreparably hurt Western and American interests in the Islamic World." Add to that the destruction of at least Kuwait and possibly Iraq and the resulting power vacuum in the area.

The day before he announced his initiative, Mr. Bush started to talk about the recession symptoms which began to plague the American economy and to rightly trace them back to the Gulf crisis. This was encouraging because it denoted that he started to realise and admit the sort of disastrous consequences of an escalation in the Gulf crisis and the global economic dimensions of a military flare up.

A diplomatic solution based on the tackling of the root causes of the crisis is not only in the best interests of all Arab parties including Kuwait, but also serves the United States' vital interests, its economy and its president himself. It better enhances the cause of the conceived new world order. As we mentioned in an earlier article, no Arab leader is intrinsically hostile to the USA. Arabs and their leaders have every reason to befriend the Americans. What they want, and insist on, is dignity, mutual respect and, of course, their occupied lands.

To sum up the situation, Bush's initiative is a courageous act of statesmanship if it is not designed to camouflage a trick or a manoeuvre, especially if he understands a peaceful solution as one leading to imposing an unconditional withdrawal but not through war. My impression is that he does and therefore it is too early to celebrate anything.

Prospect of talks eases impasse; however, obstacles remain

By John Rogers
Reuters

BAGHDAD — Neither side in the Gulf crisis wants war, but a chasm of incomprehension remains an obstacle on the path to successful peace talks. Western diplomats in the Iraqi capital said on Sunday.

They said the prospect of dialogue had opened a crack in the impasse over Iraq's four-month-old occupation of Kuwait, but the negotiating positions of the two sides left a wide gap to be bridged.

Concessions were needed from both sides — on the Palestinian issue from Washington and on Kuwait from Baghdad — to avert war, the diplomats said.

U.S. President George Bush proposed talks with Iraq on Friday. He asked Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to visit Washington first and suggested U.S. Secretary of State James Baker should meet Saddam Hussein in Baghdad later.

Iraq faces a deadline of Jan. 15, set by the United Nations Security Council, to quit Kuwait or face attack by a U.S.-led multinational force massed in Saudi Arabia to drive it from the emirate.

"The mere offer of face-to-face talks has loosened the logjam and raised expectations

of a peaceful settlement. But there is still quite a gulf in comprehension about what the talks will consist of," a Western European diplomat said.

"It's becoming clear that neither side wants war. The question is, how far are they

"The mere offer of face-to-face talks has loosened the logjam and raised expectations of a peaceful settlement. But there is still quite a gulf in comprehension about what the talks will consist of," a Western European diplomat said. "It's becoming clear that neither side wants war. The question is, how far are they boxed in?" another diplomat said.

"They have six weeks to find a way out or to prepare themselves for conflict," he added.

"Their own people will expect them to find a way out."

The United States insists the talks with Iraq will not be negotiations and will amount to a final direct appeal to Saddam to quit Kuwait.

Iraq wants a dialogue encompassing other Middle East issues. "Palestine and other occupied lands will be at the forefront of the issues dealt with in any dialogue," said

a statement from Iraq's leadership accepting Bush's proposal for talks.

Neutral diplomats see the Palestinian issue as a key area in which the United States will have to make some movement if Saddam is to be given a

draw from Kuwait, completely or in part, and to release more than 2,000 Westerners trapped in Iraq and Kuwait and regarded by their governments as hostages.

Saddam has shown no sign that he is prepared to withdraw his army, but diplomats believe that with talks in the offing, he may be open to argument and compromise.

Because Washington rejects linkage between a Kuwait withdrawal and the Palestinian issue, the scope for open bargaining is limited. The public positions of both sides, aimed at domestic audiences, are expected to remain tough.

But one diplomat said: "I think they are both in a position to make concessions once the talks start."

The nature of the talks could influence their outcome. Iraq has sought clarification of Bush's statement that envoys from U.S. partners in the Gulf force would be present at his talks with Aziz.

It would be in Iraq's interests to expand the talks and have them include broader issues than Kuwait, diplomats believe. At the very least, one said, "if expectations are rising ever so slightly, it would be hard for the Americans to attack."

'The lucky giant'

By Nesha Starcevic
The Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany — Helmut Kohl's re-election campaign showed the German chancellor in a new, self-assured style: more elegantly dressed, relaxed, a better speaker.

And the crowds were bigger, too, giving Kohl more enthusiastic receptions than ever in his eight years as chancellor. Having delivered the unification of East and West Germany in record time, Kohl had been heavily favoured all along to win a third four-year term.

But in the last four weeks of the campaign, the 60-year-old Kohl still made 28 campaign appearances, doing what he likes the best: Working the crowds and winning elections.

One of the last was in southern Germany in Offenburg, pushing his wheelchair-bound interior minister, Wolfgang Schauble, onto the podium.

Schauble barely survived an assassination attempt in October and the gesture was vintage Kohl, a move that would strike the hearts of ordinary Germans.

But it was not only electrifying. Kohl was deeply moved by Schauble's ordeal and had tears in his eyes when he had visited the bedside of his trusted minister and possible successor.

In Chemnitz, in former East Germany, before speaking at a campaign rally, Kohl stopped at a local inn to have coffee and banter with the owners.

These are the times he says he likes the best, mingling with ordinary people, when he feels like a "farmer at the plough. You can smell the earth."

Kohl became chancellor in October 1982, when a switch of coalition alliances enabled him to form a government at the head of his Christian Democratic Union. He was confirmed in national elections in 1983 and 1987.

At first he was regarded as a blunder-prone provincial politi-

cian who spoke with a distinct local accent. But Kohl has risen to the status of a respected international statesman, leader of a country that will play a political role finally equal to its economic might.

"In many fields of politics, we are in a leading position in Europe and in the world," Kohl said recently.

Often said in the past to be slow in making decisions, Kohl seized the historic opportunity presented with the collapse of East Germany's communist government and the fall of the Berlin Wall a year ago.

"I like to be underestimated. I've managed very well for 30 years by being underestimated," Kohl likes to say.

His whirlwind, relentless drive to achieve quick unification paid off when Germany became one fully sovereign state, on Oct. 3, with Kohl as chancellor.

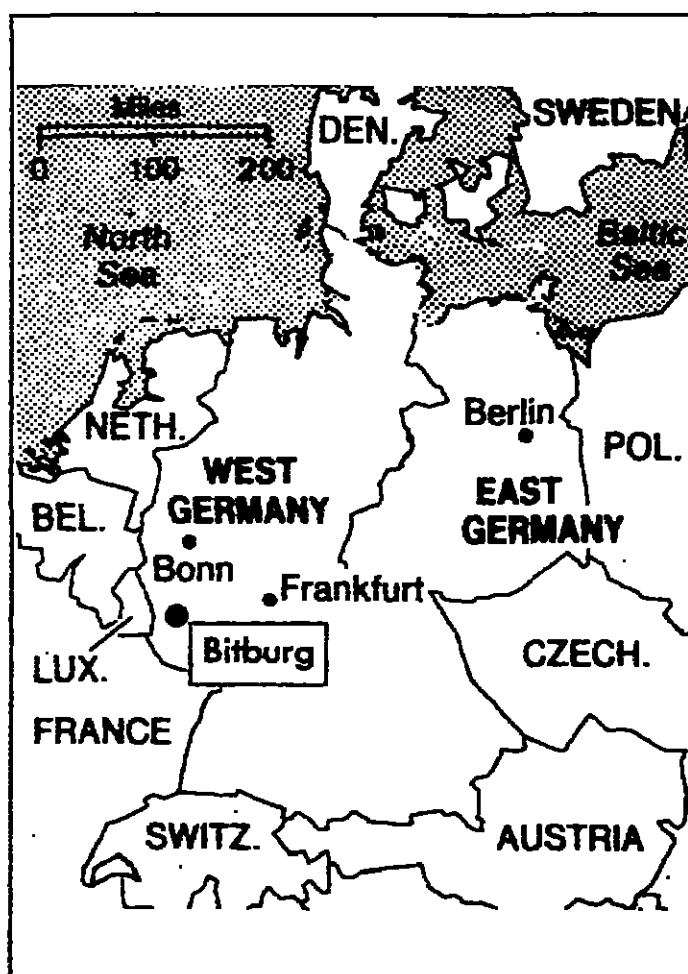
His new image is reflected by tattered, double-breasted suits and the virtual disappearance of Kohl jokes.

Cartoons used to depict Kohl floating in outer space while aides grappled with problems, or flipping coins to make decisions. Now the 6-foot-5 chancellor is more likely to be depicted as a smiling figure towering over the German landscape, as the news-weekly Der Spiegel showed him in a pre-election cover story "The Lucky Giant."

Kohl was born on April 3, 1930, in Ludwigshafen, a south-west German industrial city in a wine-growing region of the Rhine River. His father was a minor revenue official and his mother a teacher.

He earned a doctorate in political science from Heidelberg University in 1958 and devoted his entire adult life to politics. He joined the Christian Democratic Union in 1947 at the age of 17.

Kohl served in various Rhineland-Palatinate state party posts. He was elected governor in



1969 and took over as his party's national chairman in 1973.

The chancellor has been staunchly pro-American and went ahead with the deployment of U.S. nuclear missiles in the 1980s despite widespread popular opposition.

He survived several scandals that shook Bonn — such as an espionage affair in 1985 and a political payoffs scandal — and some notorious gaffes.

Kohl once compared Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's public relations skills to those of Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. Now he is said to be on first-name terms with Gorbachev,

whom he constantly praises as the man who made unification possible.

The chancellor and his wife, Hannelore, have two sons, Walter and Peter. He is a staunch Roman Catholic who often stresses family values.

Kohl is said to feel uncomfortable abroad, but goes to Austria for his annual skimming cure. He is not fluent in any foreign language, but has been heard using some English.

Kohl has said this may not be his last election and that his goal remains the complete unification of Europe by the year 2000.

Mini-summit

(Continued from page 1)

the conflict. Jordan, which vehemently opposes the U.S.-led military build-up in the Gulf, hopes that the Iraq-U.S. dialogue will contribute to decreasing chances of a Western military intervention in the region.

Despite Jordan's refusal to join the U.S.-led alliance against Iraq, the Kingdom supports an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait as part of a negotiated settlement which guarantees Iraqi economic and security interests.

Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Yemen have always indicated they were not ready to press the Iraqis for an unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, even though none of them has officially condoned the Iraqi annexation of the emirate.

In his acceptance of the American offer to talk, President Hussein insisted that all issues, especially the Palestinian problem should be discussed.

For both Jordan and the PLO a settlement of the Gulf crisis that leaves out the Arab-Israeli conflict will be insufficient. According to analysts, the Gulf crisis has in some ways boosted long-standing Jordanian and Palestinian demands for an immediate implementation of all U.N. Security Council resolutions, including 242 and 338 concerning the Palestinian problem.

The Iraqi president has implied that he was ready to withdraw from Kuwait in exchange for an Israeli pullout from the occupied Arab territories.

Neither Jordanian nor Palestinian officials have any illusion about a possible mechanical linkage between the Gulf crisis and the Arab-Israeli conflict but argue that a mechanism can be found to ensure the solution of the Palestinian problem.

The U.S. has so far refused any kind of linkage. Yet there are indications of a growing consensus — within the international community — over the urgency to address the Palestinian issue.

Dumas

(Continued from page 1)

"In the discussions, consensus appeared on the idea that the European Community must play a role today, tomorrow and after the Gulf crisis," he said.

"Peace depends on Saddam and on him alone," he added. French Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement has said Kuwait's borders — contested by Iraq — could be redrawn if Baghdad announced its intention to withdraw from Kuwait.

Chevenement, in a late-night television interview, also said a "supple connection" between Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and wider Middle East problems could prevent war in the Gulf.

"If Iraq expresses its intention to withdraw from Kuwait, we can discuss the modalities. There is a territorial dispute and a financial dispute... some good geographers have already studied what could be the shape of frontiers that you have to admit, are mostly very recent... there is matter for discussion," the French minister said.

A text of Chevenement's interview with the private channel 5 network was made available Tuesday.

Developing French President Francois Mitterrand's Sept. 24 statement that "everything would become possible" if Iraq withdrew from Kuwait, Chevenement said in Monday night's programme: "If there is a chance to avoid war, we must grasp it."

Chevenement, criticised by some in France adopting a dovish line towards Baghdad, said that after Iraq's withdrawal, a U.N. peacekeeping force could be sent to the region and an international

Ministers

(Continued from page 1)

In Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, defence ministers of the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) alliance met Tuesday to review a collective strategy in the standoff with Iraq.

They reviewed a report on Iraq's military forces that outlined the threat posed by its armaments, especially its arsenal of Soviet-designed Scud missiles, a Gulf source said.

Saudi Arabia's Prince Sultan, meanwhile, warned Baghdad that the demand for an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait is categorical.

"There is no room for manoeuvring or scheming on the part of Iraq. It has to pull out from Kuwait, no matter how long that takes," said the Saudi minister at a majlis with a large number of citizens whom he received Monday night.

He also said it was "ludicrous and impossible" that ending the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait be linked to a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

A visiting Kuwaiti delegation said in the Hague that all aspects of their country's dispute with Iraq, including Baghdad's demands for two islands, were negotiable if Iraq withdrew peacefully from Kuwait.

The four-man group of former ministers spoke to reporters after meeting Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek and members of parliament.

"After withdrawal, everything is up for negotiation," Ali Al Bader, exiled chairman of the Bank of Kuwait and the Middle East, told a press conference, when asked whether Kuwait was willing to consider Iraqi claims to the islands of Warba and Bubiyan.

War as sketched by physicians seen as a picture of a nightmare

By Clare Pedrick

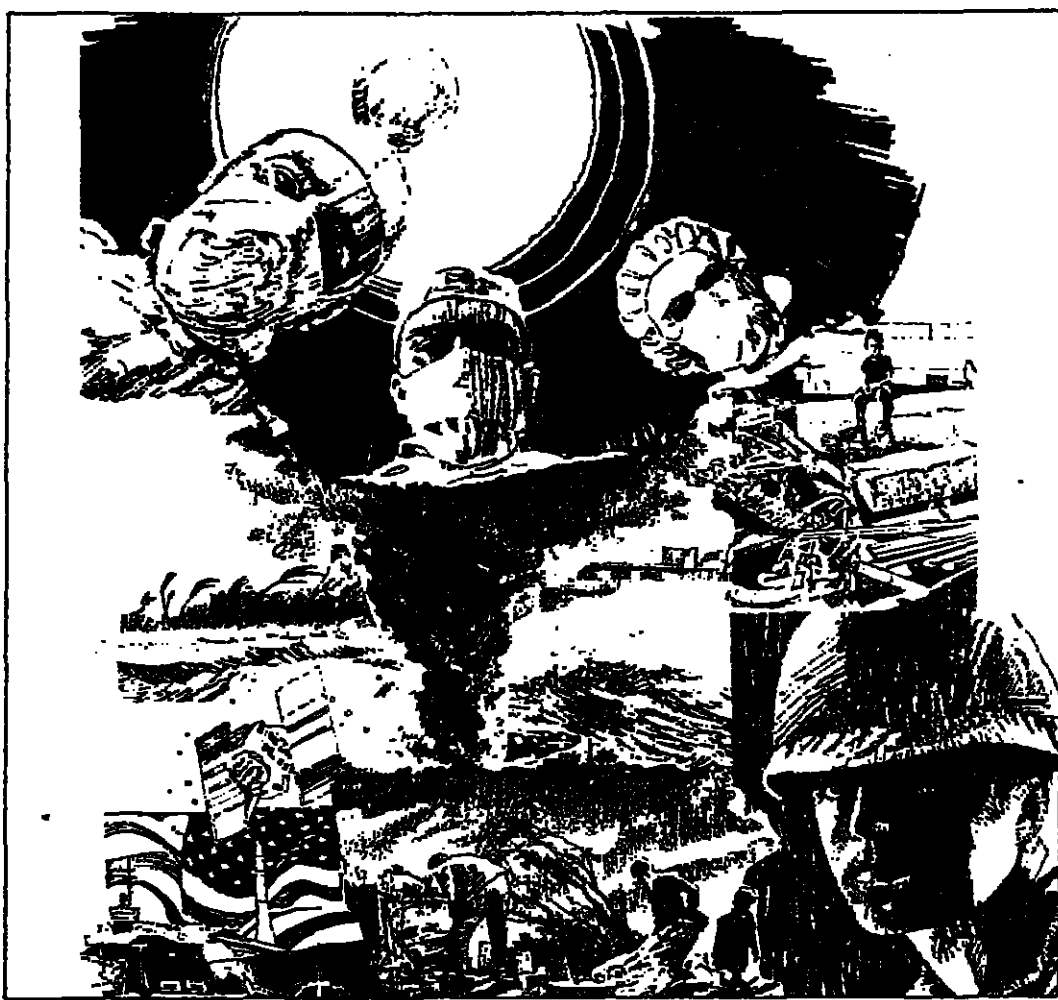
ROME — A one-megaton nuclear bomb aimed at Baghdad would kill more than 1 million people and leave an equal number to suffer the agonies of burns, radiation and slivers of metal and glass flying at up to 600 miles per hour. With medical facilities stripped to a bare minimum in the aftermath of a nuclear blast, thousands of civilians would die before they could be given even the simplest of aid.

This is the nightmare sketched by 40 physicians from Middle Eastern and Mediterranean countries who met recently in Rome to discuss the Gulf crisis. Using the explosion of a one-megaton nuclear bomb as a model, they have detailed the immediate consequences of a nuclear war erupting in Iraq.

The doctors, from Algeria, Greece, Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, and Israel, are all members of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), a movement with 200,000 affiliates in 69 countries. In 1985 the group won the Nobel Peace Prize for its contribution to easing tension at the height of the Cold War. This time, say doctors, the threat is no less serious. "We believe that nuclear war may be imminent in the Gulf, and that dialogue is therefore essential," said William Monning, executive director to IPPNW, which is based in the United States city of Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Monning said that the one-megaton bomb scenario is conservative. The reality, he claimed, could be a great deal worse. "A bomb that size would have eight times the impact of Hiroshima, which killed 100,000 people, but it is a relatively small warhead by today's standards," he added. "By studying the infrastructure of a city, we are able to predict with some accuracy what would be the medical effects if a nuclear bomb were to be dropped there."

IPPNW doctors forecast that 1,050,000 people — 23 per cent of



Baghdad's population — would be wiped out instantly in a nuclear attack on the Iraqi capital. Another 1,280,000 — 27 per cent — would be seriously injured. Of Baghdad's 3,080 doctors, 770 would be killed and another 920 put out of action by blast and burn injuries.

"That would leave just 1,400 doctors to treat 1,280,000 injured," said Monning. "If each surviving doctor spent 15 minutes with each patient, and worked 18 hours per day without a break, it would take almost two weeks for all the wounded to be seen for the first time. Clearly, during that time many people would die."

The meetings in Prato, near

Florence, and later in Rome, were the first of their kind for doctors from the Middle East. And for the first time Arab and Israeli physicians sat down at the same table to discuss the danger of full-scale war in the region. Absent from the meetings were doctors from Iraq and Kuwait, although they had been invited. The Iraqis had been unable to obtain entry visas for Italy, said Monning. The president of IPPNW in Kuwait, Minister of Planning Dr. Abdul Ahman Al-Awadi, telegraphed his regrets from Cairo, where he is living in exile.

IPPNW officials said that they are planning to send a multinational

team of doctors to Baghdad, Tel Aviv, Cairo and Amman. Iraq has agreed to host such a visit, said Monning. "The idea would be for the doctors to appeal for the preservation of life," he said. "Our aim is to educate people about the non-survivability of nuclear war. Our doctors believe that is now a real possibility in the Gulf, and where there is no medical solution to a medical crisis, we maintain that prevention is the only remedy."

As members of a non-political organisation, the IPPNW physicians are reluctant to make judgments about the Gulf crisis, but they issued a blanket condemnation of the invasion of one coun-

try by another. They have urged all parties involved in the crisis to start talks under United Nations auspices.

In the meantime they have called for the removal of nuclear weapons from the area. The environmental organisation Greenpeace recently released figures showing that there are currently around 400 nuclear warheads deployed on British, French, Soviet and U.S. ships in the Gulf, the Mediterranean and the northern Indian Ocean. That estimate was confirmed by several former U.S. military officials who attended the meeting in Rome.

"We believe it would be catastrophic for mankind if this conflict became a nuclear war," said Monning. Delegations of doctors who went to the U.S. and Iraqi embassies in Rome received assurances from each side that it would not be the first to use nuclear weapons. Even so, said Israeli doctor Hillel Shanker, the threat of a nuclear war starting by accident is a serious one. "For instance, if a chemical weapon was to be sent to Israel from Iraq, Israel might well respond with a nuclear attack," he said.

Even if nuclear conflict were to be avoided, the number of civilian casualties in a conventional attack would almost certainly be high, say the physicians. Iraq's large stock of chemical weapons threatens mostly civilians for whom there would be no escape.

"If the current situation turns to war, there will be massive numbers of both military and civilian dead and wounded," Monning said. "Everything suggests that the conflict would not be contained to just military engagement out in the desert. Any armed conflict is likely to end in a massacre of children, women and elderly people and in a mass destruction of houses, schools and hospitals and a heavy shortage of water and food supplies. Famine and epidemics will follow, and no medical response will be adequate for such an emergency." (WNL).

100 years later, Japan struggles with a democracy that works

By Michael Hirsh
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japan has a parliament that rarely decides things, a leader who rarely leads and an entrenched bureaucracy that is rarely challenged, but its unique brand of democracy seems to work.

The diet, as the parliament is known, survived a powerless infancy and militarist-dominated middle age to reach its 100th anniversary in November but members and analysts say full maturity as a democratic forum remains elusive.

Western notions of social equality and Japanese notions of social hierarchy are still at war in Asia's oldest national legislature, and at the heart of Japan's conservative democracy.

"I'm among those who believe democracy in Japan is still not quite mature," said Kazuo Aichi, a leading legislator from the ruling Liberal Democratic Party. "It doesn't really appear that true debates take place within the diet. They're almost perfunctory, ceremonial."

In part, that is because liberal democrats have been in power 35 years, since the party was formed. The leading "permanent opposition" parties, which espouse a leftist ideology, have failed to present a persuasive alternative to policies that helped build Japan's powerful economy.

To some degree, the government resembles a ghost of the feudal past, despite the vast changes in Japan since World War II.

Powerful leaders of liberal democratic factions, dispensing patronage in the manner of old U.S. political machines, run the country in alliance with government bureaucrats and big business.

Together, the conservative oligarchs perpetuate the image of a faceless "Japan, Inc.," an industrial powerhouse built with the savings of compliant consumers. Japanese bureaucrats are an elite who attract graduates of the best universities. The profession's

cachet dates from the Samurai gentry who remade feudal Japan into a westernised power in a single generation during the late 19th century.

Bureaucrats write the government legislation, which gives them enormous leverage on policy.

"I would hesitate to call it true democracy if most decisions are not publicly made in the diet," said Shimichi Kitaoka, a political scientist at Rikkyo University.

Nor are most decisions made by the prime minister, a consensus product of the unending tug of wills among five intra-party factions. Some analysts consider Japan's prime minister the least powerful leader of a major industrialised nation.

"When I was working in the U.S. in 1982-83, then-Prime Minister (Yasuhiro) Nakasone came to visit," Kitaoka said. "An American friend said to me, 'your leader is now in Washington.' I thought, 'leader?' I could not get what he meant, even as a political scientist."

"Japan is a consensual society," Aichi said. "It is just not the type of society in which the top leader makes decisions and everyone else follows. So in that sense Japan is a very democratic nation."

That has led some to question how Japan, despite its economic eminence, can become a leader internationally. The issue gained currency during months of hesitant government manoeuvring, with little result, over committing military personnel to the Gulf force arrayed against Iraq.

"This is one of the major problems facing politicians in Japan today," said Aichi, who sees no prospect of reforming the system soon.

Perhaps the strongest endorsement of Japanese democracy is that it seems to work.

Japanese sometimes say they have the largest middle class in the world.

In government surveys, 90 per cent of those responding describe themselves as middle class. That is partly because of the nation's

affluence and partly because of reforms during the postwar U.S. occupation that redistributed land and property.

The redistribution created a huge conservative constituency, the new landowners, and deprived the opposition socialist and communist parties of a natural underclass to represent.

Many of today's ruling oligarchs rose from humble families through sheer ability.

"The truth is that Japan, like the United States, has woven the threads of democratic political life — civil liberties, open elections, competitive politics and responsible government — into the fabric of the nation's social structure to create a stable political system that echoes universal values and behaviour while at the same time being utterly unique," Gerlad Curtis, an expert on Japanese politics at Columbia University, wrote recently.

Some commentators say the best proof that Japan is becoming a true democracy is a new calm in public political debate.

Some experts were impressed by the collective yawn with which many Japanese treated recent constitutional debates of involvement in the Gulf and aspects of Emperor Akihito's enthronement.

Similar issues testing Japan's "peace constitution" aroused widespread violence and protests in the 1950s and 1960s, when the specter of the militarism that plunged Japan into the disastrous war was still vivid.

"It didn't have the dimensions of a systemic crisis this time," said J. Victor Kischmann, a Cornell University expert in modern Japanese history working in Japan. "People didn't feel that institutions were being trampled on. Maybe the sense of threat has receded."

Because of Japan's economic success, he said, "all those traits that were once vilified abroad, everyone now wants to imitate. That kind of thing can give people a sense that 'we were ok all the time.'"

Ortega

(Continued from page 1)

preventing hostile acts by the more powerful industrialised countries from encroaching upon the sovereignty and the rights of the developing countries.

"We have many problems in Nicaragua and Latin America, but we believe that the solution of our problems to a great extent depends on how things develop in this region," he said.

Ortega has said that the Gulf crisis is a manifestation of the North-South conflict and that a peaceful solution based on international law will be a victory to the South.

Ortega was given a standing ovation by enthusiastic students who crowded the auditorium and spilled over to the corridor. His remarks about the need for the Third World (the South) to unite to face a united North in order to assert the developing countries' rights were met with loud applause.

Students followed him outside the auditorium pressing him with questions and asking for this autograph. In their questions the students projected concern about the future of the Third World in the light of the dominance of the United States as the leading superpower.

At one stage when Ortega described the Soviet Union's position in the Gulf as "sad... for the Soviet Union is no longer the influential superpower it was," students responded with loud applause in agreement.

Israel

(Continued from page 1)

patrol boat's order to stop. Rifle fire from at least three air force helicopters forced the boat to return to the beach near the Dair Al Balah Palestinian camp, witnesses said. Ground forces shot dead one man who tried to flee and arrested the others. Residents at first hurled stones at the low-flying helicopters,

thinking the boatmen were guerrillas. The helicopters dropped teargas and percussion grenades to try to disperse the demonstrators.

But witnesses said demonstrators went home when they understood from relatives of those in the boat that they were drug smugglers.

A Palestinian guerrilla was killed and an Israeli soldier wounded Tuesday in a clash inside Israel's self-declared South Lebanon "security zone," security sources said.

They said the clash happened when an Israeli patrol spotted Palestinian guerrillas who had infiltrated the zone. The sources would not give further details.

In Beirut, Palestinian sources said the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) was behind Tuesday's infiltration attempt.

Soviets

(Continued from page 1)

Bob Hawke said Australia was stepping up its role in the Gulf. He said U.N. sanctions against

Iraq did not appear to be working and a destroyer, frigate and a supply ship were being put under U.S. operational control.

In Baghdad, the ruling Baath Party newspaper Al Thawra Tuesday called U.S. President George Bush a liar and warned him that a war in the Gulf would not be a backyard picnic like Panama or Grenada.

"Bush spoke a few days ago about the aggression he intended to launch against Iraq and, being a liar, he claimed that war with Iraq would be quick and different from the Vietnam war."

"If Bush misunderstands, the American people surely understand that war with Iraq means throwing the U.S. forces into an annihilating, losing and costly military adventure," the paper said.

Bush, in a surprise initiative following U.N. approval of the war resolution, invited Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz to Washington for talks and said Secretary of State James Baker would visit Baghdad.

Iraq accepted the offer. U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney said Tuesday a massive

build-up of American troops in the Gulf will be complete by the mid-January U.N. deadline authorising the use of military force against Iraq.

But Cheney said at the start of a two-day visit to Poland that no decision had yet been made in Washington on whether to go to war.

He was speaking with reporters accompanying him on the trip, his first to Eastern Europe where the Warsaw Pact is crumbling.

Senior defence officials with Cheney on the flight from Washington said the United States would have more than 400,000 soldiers, airmen and sailors in the Gulf region by mid-January — around the 15th, Cheney told reporters.

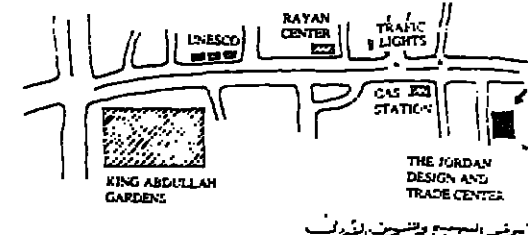
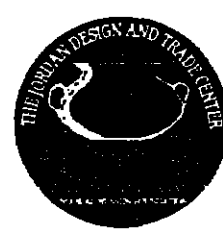
"Some will be there sooner than that, but I would think that the bulk of the additional deployment should be completed by the middle of January."

The United States now has more than 240,000 troops in the Gulf region. Bush is sending over 150,000 more as part of the international force arrayed against Iraq.

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JORDAN MARKET PLACE

OAPEC won't discuss Kuwait question-Egypt

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — A senior Egyptian oil official Tuesday ruled out the possibility that Iraq might be expelled from an Arab petroleum organisation as punishment for invading Kuwait.

Mohammad Shawkat, adviser to oil minister Abdul Hady Kandil, said there is no plan for oil ministers of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries even to discuss the idea at their meeting in Cairo next Saturday.

"To begin with, this is not on the agenda," said Shawkat, who will be the conference spokesman.

"Moreover, it's a political issue, and OAPEC's charter excludes politics. The organisation has economic objectives involving cooperation and policy coordination among its members."

Shawkat was commenting on speculation that Kuwait or other members of the 10-country group would suggest to the ministers that Iraq be expelled. There also have been reports that the ministers would consider moving the organisation's headquarters from Kuwait, which Iraq annexed on Aug. 8.

Such a suggestion might come before the ministers, Shawkat said. Iraq might want it moved to Baghdad to assert its sovereignty over Kuwait, or another member

GATT trade talks deadlocked over subsidies

BRUSSELS (R) — World trade talks moved into a critical stage Tuesday because of a deadlock over how much to subsidise farmers which pits the EC against most of its global trading partners.

"Nothing has happened. We need a breakthrough today," Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Julius Katz told Reuters on the second day of a week-long ministerial meeting intended to wrap up the four-year Uruguay Round of trade talks.

Delegates to the 107-nation negotiations were unanimous in saying a breakthrough on farming was crucial in the first two days to avoid overall failure. On Monday the major players merely restated their positions.

Failure to agree on farm subsidies could threaten agreement on liberalising other areas of commerce and run the risk of a new round of protectionism at the very moment when the slowing world economy needs a boost, delegates believe.

Several members of the 11-nation Cairns Group of farm exporters have made it clear that without a solid agreement on cutting farm subsidies they would not be able to accept the results of the entire Uruguay Round, negotiated under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Philip Burdon, trade minister of Cairns member New Zealand, told the conference on Monday: "After four years, the Cairns Group message seems to have sunk in — no agriculture, no

Uruguay Round."

"The Cairns Group have been implying they're reaching the end of their patience," one trade official commented. "The hour of reckoning is drawing near."

Swedish Agriculture Minister Mats Hellstrom, who chaired an agriculture negotiating group on Monday evening, reported to a conference steering committee on Tuesday morning that there was so far no progress.

"The president (Hellstrom) said there was no new element at this particular moment," European Commission spokesman Nico Wegter said.

"At the moment there is nothing to talk about," U.S. Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter said, adding that farm exporters like Argentina and Brazil

were obviously becoming highly frustrated.

"The community was totally isolated (at Monday night's meeting)... we can't even have a discussion until the community shows a willingness to do something," Yeutter said.

The European Community (EC) has proposed a cut of 30 per cent in domestic farm subsidies from 1986 levels but is unwilling to commit itself to cuts in export subsidies and import barriers.

The Cairns Group and the United States, which contend that the EC is shutting them out of Europe and competing unfairly on other markets, want a 75 per cent cut in internal support and import barriers and 90 per cent in export subsidies.

The blockade on agriculture has held up progress in several other areas, including freer trade in tropical products and clothing.

Alvaro Ramos, agriculture minister for Cairns member Uruguay, expressed alarm on behalf of 26 Latin American nations following the lack of progress in the farm meeting.

"We wasted two hours of the precious time we've got. Our countries wish to convey our alarm at the state of negotiations," he said.

Hellstrom was holding bilateral meetings with EC, U.S. and Cairns officials on Tuesday to see if there was any way out of the deadlock and would reconvene the agriculture negotiating group if there was a chance of movement, officials said.

Foreign investment off to slow start in Algeria

By Philip Shehadi
Reuter

ALGIERS — Foreign investors are responding cautiously to new incentives offered by Algeria which threw open the door to foreign capital nine months ago to help pull itself out of recession.

The central bank has approved six projects under a new law on money and credit that overturned two decades of tight curbs on foreign investment, part of moves from socialist central planning to a market economy.

But the results have disappointed officials as many potential investors — facing legal and political uncertainties — prefer to stay on the sidelines.

"We have not yet had the level of response we were expecting, and this does not surprise us. We are completely at the start of the experiment," said central bank vice-governor Abdelkader Belgharbi, who expected the pace to

Even slower to take off has been a controversial new system of concessionaires and wholesalers that allows foreign multinationals to sell directly in Algeria, in hard currency or dinars, for the first time since the 1970s.

The scheme was announced with much fanfare in August but it quickly bogged down in debate over whether parallel productive investments were required by law and whether the central bank was competent to review applications.

The government is keen to defend itself against charges that foreign investors and concessionaires are a threat to national industry and economic independence.

"We do not want to open the market in an uncontrolled way. It will not be like the Egyptian overture," Belgharbi said, referring to the rapid liberalisation of Egypt's socialist economy in the 1970s. "Our ambition is about to put people to work and produce things."

The central bank's council on money and credit had received some 300 applications for concessionaires and wholesalers, about half from foreign firms, but then decided it was not competent to approve those who did not also plan productive investment.

"The council considers it was not competent to approve traders... we are in the process of finding a channel with the commerce ministry that will allow us to trace a framework of approval for these (purely commercial) concessionaires," Belgharbi said.

Approved projects, of which four were given the go-ahead well before the new law, carry a total investment value of \$334 million. More than 738 million dinars (\$74 million) of that will be raised locally.

They include two joint ventures involving the state hydrocarbons group Sonatrach, one with Compagnie Francaise des Petroles for a well workover company and another with Air Li-

quide of France and Air Chemical Products of the United States for a helium and nitrogen plant in the western port of Arzew.

The state petrochemical firm Enip plans a high-density polyethylene factory in the eastern port of Skikda with Spain's Repsol Quimica.

Other approved projects are a private Moroccan-Algerian hydraulic pump factory, a Norwegian-Algerian fishing venture and an Islamic bank half owned by the Saudi Arabian Baraka group.

But the biggest potential investors, some of whom like pharmaceutical giant Pfizer of the United States and Rhone-Poulenc of France, are engaged in preliminary talks with Algerian partners. They are still waiting on the wings.

"There is an extraordinary level of interest," said one Algerian-based lawyer specialising in international firms. "But the laws and regulations are simply

not clear. Firms do not want to spend money preparing a project only to have it rejected."

Companies want more precise criteria on what projects are acceptable and how they can be financed, the lawyer said.

Another source of hesitation is the future of the government of Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche, a key architect of economic liberalisation, whose National Liberation Front was badly beaten in local elections last June by the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

The first multi-party parliamentary elections are due early next year, and Belgharbi sought to reassure investors.

"We understand that potential partners may harbour some anxieties on the political future of Algeria," he said. "But the statements made by opposition parties show they are almost all open to a market economy including the Islamic (fundamentalist) tendency."

North Cyprus court lifts injunction of Pelly Peck firms

NICOSIA (R) — A judge in North Cyprus cleared the way Tuesday for a British-led investigation into troubled fruits-and-electronics conglomerate Polly Peck's subsidiaries in the breakaway Turkish republic.

Judge Hassan Sozmenen lifted an injunction blocking access to the conglomerate's units in North Cyprus, where Polly Peck firms generate a third of the state's income.

The injunction had been granted to drought-hit local fruit growers who feared they would lose their livelihoods if British court-appointed administrators were allowed to probe companies built up by rags-to-riches Turkish-Cypriot Asil Nadir.

"The plaintiffs have withdrawn the injunction, the case is dismissed, there is no longer a block on information into Nadir's companies," he told Reuters at the Nicosia district court.

Polly Peck International PLC entered administration in October with debts of more than £1.3 billion (\$2.56 billion).

Riza Kivane, the fruit growers' lawyer, said the North Cyprus injunction was withdrawn after Nadir assured them he would meet any losses the lifting might cause.

In London on Monday, a bankruptcy court hearing was adjourned until January 7 to give Nadir time to arrange a mortgage on his assets so he can pay cash claims.

A collapse of Nadir's business empire would jeopardise thousands of jobs in the self-declared Turkish state, where one person in every 20 works for him.

More than 500 out of 9,000 Nadir employees in North Cyprus have been laid off and last week a financial source working for him said up to 3,000 jobs could be lost.

Polly Peck holdings in North Cyprus include three hotels, a construction company, a pharmaceutical firm, a shipping line and more than 60 per cent of citrus production.

Cyprus-born Nadir owns four newspapers, a bank, and a printing plant. His family runs Nobel Air, a small private airline, a tourism agency and a textile business.

Among Nadir projects to have been put on ice in North Cyprus is the half-built \$25 million (\$49.18 million) Crystal Cove Hotel in the port of Kyrenia.

Nadir, who was not in court, could not be reached for comment on the lifting of the injunction but British court-appointed administrator Richard Stone said last month the Turkish-Cypriot businessman was helping efforts to lift it.

Cyprus is going through its worst drought in 20 years and as a result citrus exports from the north will be cut by about a third from last year's 110,000 tonnes.

Nadir told the British Broadcasting Corporation last month that he had between £60 and 80 million (\$118 to 160 million) in the area.

Foreign currency reserves of North Cyprus — where tourism and citrus exports are the mainstay of the economy — stand at around \$200 million.

In Britain, stockbroker Barclays de Zoete Wedd (BZW) is suing Nadir for £3.6 million (\$6.9 million).

The BZW action is supported by another broker, Lenham Brothers Securities, which is suing Nadir for £18.5 million pounds (\$35.5 million).

Bank sources in Istanbul said Nadir was trying to find buyers for his merchant bank Impex, to which commercial banks have cut credit lines.

IMF chief urges the rich to support the poor

BRUSSELS (R) — The head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) pledged on Tuesday to help soften the economic blow for the world's poorest countries if GATT nations agree this week to drop trade barriers.

But Michel Camdessus, managing director of the world monetary watchdog, urged industrialised countries not to forget developing countries when the four-year Uruguay Round of GATT talks winds up.

"We are able to support their efforts with appropriate financing. We can do that and have to do that," he said.

But he said that the world's developed countries must first ratify an agreed 50 per cent increase in their financial obligations to the IMF.

The increases would bring the amount of capital underwritten to \$60 billion up to March 1993.

Camdessus said he was prepared to ask for further increases to offset the damage caused to developing countries' balance of payments by opening their markets to developed countries' services and goods.

"I urge the industrialised not to abandon developing countries in the middle of their crossing," he said.

He was speaking to reporters before addressing ministers in Brussels to conclude the 107-nation Uruguay Round taking place under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The talks are aimed at reducing trade barriers and setting trading rules for the next century.

The 15-sector round has become bogged down by a squabble over how far and fast to cut farm subsidies.

Third World countries, who went to the talks four years ago with high hopes of gaining more open markets for their farm produce and textiles and earning more hard currency, say their special needs have been forgotten.

They are afraid industrialised countries will agree among themselves and forget their own needs.

Camdessus said failure of the GATT round would hit the world economy at a time when it is most vulnerable due to the crisis in the Gulf.

Ras Tannurah oil output reduced to half due to fire

DUBAI (R) — A fire at the world's biggest oil refinery in Saudi Arabia slashed output by nearly half, industry sources in the Gulf said Tuesday.

They said output at Ras Tannurah, just 200 kilometres south of Kuwait and a supplier of fuel for the multinational force confronting Iraq, had fallen by 250,000 barrels per day (bpd) to about 300,000.

"Production in one of the crude units is down, no one knows when it will start operating again," an executive based in Saudi Arabia said.

But industry sources said a loss of 35,000 bpd of aviation fuel for the multinational force could easily be made up from supplies elsewhere and would not affect the strike capability of more than 1,000 warplanes.

Saudi Arabian authorities said Friday's fire was caused by a leaking pipe but gave no other details. Three workers were injured.

Industry sources said one of the refinery's two crude processing units suffered major damage in the four-hour blaze — pumps were lost, pipes twisted, and the

main distillation column bent.

The damage cut the amount of crude oil entering the Gulf coast refinery by 230,000 bpd, reducing its output by the same amount.

Saudi oil officials declined to comment on the extent of the damage at the plant which had a capacity of 530,000 bpd.

It stepped up production to almost full capacity after Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2.

The U.N. trade embargo against Iraq and Kuwait deprived the world oil market of about four million bpd.

Oil traders said the Saudi Arabian Refining and Marketing Co. (SAMAREC), which sells the refinery's products, had asked some purchasers whether they wanted to postpone shipments due over the next two days, or take them from a different refinery.

On Sunday SAMAREC cancelled a fuel oil tender from Ras Tannurah scheduled for early December but did not say if it was due to the fire.

It was not clear how long it would take to carry out repairs, the sources said.

Saudi Arabia's total refining capacity is more than 1.7 million bpd.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Tuesday, December 4, 1990 Central Bank official rates					
Buy	Sell	Japanese yen (for 100)	493.4	496.4	
U.S. dollar	666.0	664.0			
Pound Sterling	1268.1	1275.7			
Deutschemark	438.5	441.1			
Swiss franc	512.8	515.9			
French franc	129.7	130.5			
Dutch guilder			388.8	391.1	
Swedish crown			117.1	117.8	
Italian lira (for 100)			58.4	58.8	
Belgian franc (for 10)			212.6	213.9	

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DEATH SQUAD
Arabic
Show: 12:30, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:15 p.m.

Watkins in UAE

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. Energy Secretary James Watkins on Tuesday discussed with United Arab Emirates officials means of securing a free flow of oil from the Gulf if war breaks out, oil sources said.

The United States wants clear coordination with the Gulf states to secure oil supplies to the rest of the world in case war breaks out with Iraq, the oil sources here said, with no further elaboration. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

Watkins and the UAE president, Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan discussed "the situation in the world oil market in the light of the Gulf crisis and bilateral energy cooperation," said the UAE official news agency, WAM.

Watkins was in Abu Dhabi on a 24-hour stay after a visit to Saudi Arabia where he agreed that the United States would make up from its strategic petroleum reserves oil shortfalls in case the Gulf crisis erupted into war.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE are close allies of the United States in the standoff with Iraq, and the two countries boosted their output to the maximum to offset the loss of 4 million barrels per day that resulted from the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August.

The two Gulf oil producers are also ranking members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries.

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Gorbachev to maintain prime minister in leadership reshape

MOSCOW (R) — President Mikhail Gorbachev plans to maintain the post of prime minister in a reshaped Soviet leadership in which he will assume direct control over the government, the Interfax news agency reported.

The independent agency which has good official contacts said this would be part of proposals increasing his personal power being put to the country's parliament, the Supreme Soviet, by Gorbachev Tuesday.

There was no immediate indication who would fill the post but there have been increasing signs in the past few weeks that the present prime minister, Nikolai Ryzhkov, would be retained despite the chaotic state of the country's economy.

The 61-year-old Ryzhkov, in the job since September 1985, has apparently moved to win support from Communist Party conservatives and the military establishment who are currently putting pressure on Gorbachev to rein in on reform.

The government weekly Pravitsvenny Vestnik Tuesday reported him as giving a ringing endorsement to the Soviet military-industrial complex during a visit last week to the Mari Republic where many defence plants are located.

"The country's military-industrial complex has been created over decades by the labour and the skill of the entire people, it employs the best workers and engineers, has the most modern equipment and sophisticated technology," Ryzhkov declared.

"I hear calls for the complex to be broken up, but I am categorically opposed to this and as long as I am working and as long as I live I will not permit it," he told workers at one plant, according to the weekly.

Under the leadership reform first presented to parliament on Nov. 17, Gorbachev said he would take charge of the council of ministers or government, raising speculation that the increasingly unpopular Ryzhkov might step aside.

Radicals and even moderate reformers say the former engineer and factory manager has worked to restrict the scope of the transfer to a market economy championed by Gorbachev and publicly by Ryzhkov himself.

Soviet sources say the main author of the now effectively abandoned "500-day" transition programme, economist Stanislav Shatalin, clashed heatedly with Ryzhkov at a top-level Kremlin meeting last month and subsequently fell seriously ill.

Ivan Silayev, prime minister of the huge Russian Federation and a former deputy to Ryzhkov, told his parliament Tuesday his administration could not implement the programme fully because of resistance from the union government.

Gorbachev went to the Supreme Soviet against a background of increasing accusations from radicals that he is pulling back from wide-ranging reform under heavy pressure from hard-liners and the military.

Political figures on the Soviet left say the president's removal at the weekend of Interior Minister Vadim Bakatin who had allowed Communist Party control over the police to be relaxed was a concession to the conservatives.

Bakatin, who according to parliamentary sources could be offered an ambassadorial post, was replaced by a long-time Communist official, Boris Pugo, who headed the KGB security police in Latvia and then became its party chief.

Gorbachev nominated General Boris Gromov, ex-commander of Soviet forces in Afghanistan who has in the past asserted his belief in strong central authority and Communism, to be Pugo's first deputy at the ministry.

Both appointments have to be ratified by the Supreme Soviet, but in the current climate of mounting crime and public sentiment for law and order amid widespread food shortages the legislature is believed unlikely to resist.

Despite charges by the radicals against Gorbachev, some supporters say they fail to take into account the realities of the current situation where despite the appearance of many new parties, the Communist apparatus remains very powerful.

"Gorbachev has to advance towards reforms and, in particular, towards a market... when in his own rear parts of conservatism have stepped up their activity," said Vyacheslav Kostikov of the Novosti Press Agency.

"To accuse Gorbachev of running too slowly means failing to see the realities and traditions in which his perestroika is unfolding," Kostikov wrote in a commentary distributed by Novosti Tuesday.

Meanwhile Russian President Boris Yeltsin has said his republic won't sign the country's new union treaty until Gorbachev recognises the republic's right to control its own economy.

Opposition rejects Ershad's peace offer

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's main opposition leaders Tuesday rejected a surprise peace plan by President Hussain Mohammad Ershad, accusing him of trying to buy time and demanding his immediate resignation.

They said wide-ranging proposals Ershad offered on Monday night, including elections for his job, was an attempt to divide his opponents, quell public outrage against him and prolong his rule.

"His bluff has been called. He is planning other methods to cling on to power," said Begum Khaleda Zia, leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

As she made the statement an eight-hour general strike took hold in Bangladesh, closing offices, banks and businesses and halting public transport.

It was the first of a series of eight-hour strikes which the opposition said would continue until Ershad resigned. He has ruled the impoverished South Asian country for nearly nine years.

More than 70 people have died and 500 wounded in clashes between security forces and demonstrators since Ershad imposed a state of emergency last week.

"Why can't he resign here and now rather than bringing all kinds of red herrings across the trail?" Khaleda asked.

All three opposition alliances have rejected Ershad's peace plan and say they will not hold a dialogue with the Bangladeshi leader.

"This is a ruse and we totally reject it," said Awami League Joint Secretary Abdul Jalil.

Rashed Khan Menon, leader of a five-party alliance, said: "This is yet another bluff from Ershad. People will never step into his trap."

In his proposals, which Western diplomats described as a significant retreat, Ershad said he would:

- Resign from office 15 days before nominations were called for presidential elections, handing over power to a neutral vice-president appointed in consultation with the opposition.

- Dissolve parliament.

- Reconstitute the election commission, which supervises the polling, to ensure its neutrality.

- Hold presidential and parliamentary elections on the same day.

- Permit state-owned radio and television to give equal access to political parties.

- Withdraw the state of emergency by December 16.

- Allow foreign dignitaries to oversee elections.

- Reopen all educational institutions of the country by 17 December including Dhaka University, which is the centre of the country's opposition politics.

- Withdraw all press censorship.

- Invite political parties and alliances to discuss with his representatives how to implement those objectives.

Ershad said former U.S. President Jimmy Carter had accepted his invitation to head a team of election observers.

Invitations had been sent to British parliamentarians. "I want to eliminate the roots of contention, to remove last vestige of the fear of mutual suspicion, mistrust and distrust," he said in his broadcast.

Planes collide at Detroit Airport, at least 8 killed

ROMULUS, Michigan (AP) — At least eight people were killed and 20 injured when a jetliner clipped another while preparing for takeoff, igniting a fire that left one plane in smoking ruins, officials said.

It was not immediately clear what caused the collision at the Detroit Airport Monday between a DC-9 and a Boeing 727-200, both operated by Northwest Airlines. A spokesman for air traffic controllers said the DC-9 appeared to have become lost on a slick, foggy taxiway and strayed into the 727's path.

For nearly an hour after the accident, smoke billowed out of the fuselage of the DC-9, where passengers apparently became trapped by the fast-moving fire. By the time the fire was extinguished, much of the plane's roof was open to the overcast sky.

Officials had initially said that 19 people were killed, but Northwest officials and Wayne County executive Edward McNamara later said that was wrong.

McNamara said the medical examiner had "swept through the wreckage twice and found nine bodies," while Northwest spokesman Bob Gibbons said the corner "told a Northwest representative that there were eight dead."

Gibbons stressed that authorities were not ruling out further changes in the death toll. "This is probably going to go up or down all evening," he said shortly after 7 p.m. (0000GMT).

The nationalities of the dead and injured was not immediately available.

The DC-9, flight 1482 to Pitt-

sburgh, was carrying 39 passengers and four crewmembers, according to the airline. The 727, Flight 299 to Memphis, was carrying 146 passengers.

Both flights had originated in Detroit, said Patrick McCann, a Northwest spokesman at its headquarters in Eagan, Minnesota.

"Apparently the right wing of the 727 hit the aft section, the engine, of the DC-9, taking the engine off," said Alan Muncester, another Northwest spokesman. "That resulted in the fire. That, at this point, is all we know."

At the time of the crash, visibility was poor and the ground was wet from a morning snow and sleet storm that delayed flights at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Muncester said the airport had been closed to inbound traffic but that planes were being allowed to take off.

Tony Dresden, a spokesman for the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, a union representing air traffic controllers, said there was about 400 metres visibility in the air, but only about 240 metres on the ground.

"We've had some discussions with our people out there," Dresden said. "The DC-9 pilot became lost on the runways. The pilot gave the ground controller erroneous information about his position and turned right onto the runway where the 727 was taxiing."

The DC-9 pilot discovered at the very last moment where he was, and so the ground controller told him to immediately get off that runway, but it was too late."

Shuttle telescope unable to lock onto stars

HOUSTON (R) — Computer programmers Tuesday worked frantically but were unable to correct problems that have prevented telescopes aboard a U.S. space shuttle from providing a glimpse of the universe as it was billions of years ago.

"It's been a real zoo down here," said Ted Gull, chief scientist for the mission of shuttle Columbia.

The four telescopes that make up a \$148 million, 15-tonne observatory appeared to be working, but a complex tracking system designed to aim the telescopes failed.

The system is similar to one carried on another U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) shuttle in 1985 which also failed.

Scientists were unable to agree as to why the aiming system failed, but the reason given by most was that it was too sensitive and vulnerable to interference from unwanted light, like moonbeams or the glow from the Earth's atmosphere.

Attempts to redesign computer software so the star-tracking system would ignore interference were hampered by a malfunction late Monday of a shuttle computer that controls the tracking system.

The computer had to be restarted and the redesigned software was being retransmitted to Columbia by scientists on the ground.

Astronauts, who were working in alternating 12-hour shifts, tried to aim the telescopes manually, but were having little success.

Not only is the shuttle moving at high speed, circling the Earth every 91 minutes, it also pitches and rolls slightly in orbit.

Scientists said aiming the telescopes at stars billions of light years away was like trying to look through a pair of binoculars while standing on the deck of a ship at sea.

After several hours of using a small "joystick" to aim the telescopes, a clearly frustrated astronaut Ron Parise radioed to NASA flight controllers in Huntsville, Alabama, that the target star was "wandering around too fast" to remain centred in the crosshairs of his aiming display.

A few minutes later, astronaut Robert Parker, when ordered by ground controllers to make another try after several unsuccessful attempts, asked by radio whether this attempt "has any more chance of working than the others?"

Michelle Schneider, a Huntsville flight controller, could be seen on NASA's closed-circuit television shaking her head in resignation, but she answered: "We hope so, Bob."

Despite the difficulties, NASA officials said the problems amounted to "trouble-shooting" and the flight of Columbia, which began early Sunday, would remain in space until its scheduled landing on Dec. 11.

Rebels surrender before Bush's visit to Argentina

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Rebel Argentine troops calling for an army shake-up have surrendered two days before U.S. President George Bush arrives as part of a South American tour to celebrate the continent's return to democracy.

After a day of bloody fighting, some 200 rebel soldiers walked out of army buildings seized in dawn raids Monday and handed weapons over to troops loyal to President Carlos Menem.

Menem told a news conference after the surrender: "A black chapter of Argentina's history is closed with this episode."

At least nine people died in the revolt, the latest in Argentina's stormy military history, and dozens were wounded, press reports said.

Three loyalist officers and one colonel on the rebel side were reported killed. Five civilians died and 20 were hurt when a rebel tank heading for Buenos Aires collided with a bus. Other injuries included soldiers, journalists and a Red Cross worker.

In Brasilia Monday at the start of a five-nation South American tour, Bush said he had no plans to cancel his trip to Argentina Wednesday for talks with Menem.

As rebels defended army headquarters near the Argentine presidential palace, Bush told the Brazilian Congress that Latin America was close to a new dawn and urged a cooperative effort to achieve democracy across the Western hemisphere.

The uprising, the fourth since April 1987, began early Monday when rebel troops attacked the

downtown coast guard headquarters, took over the army headquarters and occupied a suburban garrison.

They gave up after fierce fighting in which loyal troops pounded some rebel positions with field guns and tanks.

Press reports said a column of rebel tanks approaching Buenos Aires was also stopped after an air force bombardment.

A rebel interviewed by local radio said the uprising was aimed at forcing changes in army high command and was not intended to overthrow the government. But Menem said it had been a coup attempt and rebels could face the death penalty.

The last rebel group to surrender was at army headquarters. They gave up after nightfall after the government threatened to bomb the building and spotter planes roared overhead.

Eyewitnesses said about 75 rebels sat sullenly outside with heads bowed as their captors collected their gear and boots.

Miguel Angel Toma, president of the Congressional Defence Committee, said the rebels were linked to retired Colonel Mohammad Ali Seineldin, who led a December 1988 uprising and was regarded as the inspiration for two earlier rebellions.

The uprisings involved junior officers unhappy with the high command and angry at trials of military personnel for crimes committed during the 1976-83 military junta's war on leftists.

Seineldin is detained at a base in the Andes for sending Menem an open letter warning of an explosive situation in the army.

Michigan suicide doctor charged with murder

PONTIAC, Michigan (AP) — A doctor who invented a device that a woman used to kill herself was charged with first-degree murder by a prosecutor.

Janet Adkins, 54, of Portland, Oregon, died on June 4 after being hooked to the device invented by Dr. Jack Kevorkian.

She had been diagnosed in June 1989 with Alzheimer's disease.

Kevorkian connected Adkins to an intravenous solution that would stop her heart, but she activated the switch that allowed it to flow into her veins.

A recently completed toxicology report identified the solution as the cause of death. Oakland County Prosecutor Richard Thompson told reporters in announcing the charges. The

autopsy also showed the woman suffered from Alzheimer's disease.

Kevorkian faced a court appearance on the charge.

"Dr. Kevorkian was the primary and legal cause of Janet Adkins' death. He cannot avoid his criminal culpability by the clever use of a switch," Thompson said. "He constructed the suicide machine for the sole purpose of causing death. He saw Janet Adkins for the sole purpose of causing her death."

The criminal charges were filed one day before a civil trial in Oakland County circuit court to determine whether Kevorkian could have his machine back. It was confiscated after the woman's death.

Youths go on rampage after policemen acquitted of murder

MIAMI (AP) — Several hundred youths set fires and threw rocks and bottles at police after six police officers were acquitted of most federal civil rights charges in the beating death of a small-time drug dealer.

Police said hundreds of people, some with paper bags over their heads, chased after police, looted a store and set fires to a car, an abandoned home and several trash bins in the Hispanic neighbourhood where Leonardo Mercado was fatally beaten by police in 1988.

There were no immediate reports of injuries, although several news photographers said they were roughed up and had their cameras stolen by bands of youths.

About 300 police closed off about 10 city blocks and prepared to move in with dogs and helicopters.

"It's still early. We're trying to mobilise and get units to come in and resolve this as soon as we can," Miami police spokesman George Law said Monday night.

"Right now we're just trying to maintain a perimeter outside this burning building, rock-throwing type of thing."

It is also coming from those who feel threatened by the country's market-oriented economic reforms, those tired of the current crop of politicians, those

7 more hacked to death in S. Africa

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Police found seven more blacks hacked and beaten to death early Tuesday, continuing South Africa's latest spasm of township warfare that has claimed nearly 80 victims in the last three days.

The body count from three months of warfare in Johannesburg's satellite black communities stood at about 1,000, and white and black leaders expressed fears the slaughter would slow down talks aimed at ending apartheid and introducing democracy.

Police said they knew of 71 people shot, bludgeoned or hacked to death in swirling street battles Sunday and Monday.

The townships, clamped under curfew Monday night, were described as tense but quiet Tuesday.

No further incidents were reported overnight as troops moved in to back up police given powers of search and arrest under curfew laws.

But the African National Congress (ANC) of Nelson Mandela, which accuses white rightists in the security forces of unleashing the violence to derail progress to black rule, said it had received numerous threats of more violence to come over the Christmas holiday season.

The government dismisses the ANC accusations as propaganda and blames the trouble on a power struggle between the biggest anti-apartheid group and its main rival, the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party of chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

Law and Order Minister Adrian Vlok imposed the all-night curfew on the townships of Kaitshong, Thokozani, Vosloorus and Bekkersdal, homes for more than a million people at the industrial heart of the country, saying:

"We are not part of Solidarity, those who would like a looser, less churchy moral climate."

They seem unperturbed that Tyminski hasn't lived in Poland for 21 years, missed the country's fight against communism and used a former party newspaper correspondent to ghost-write his book.

Nor do they seem bothered by his enigmatic past of mysterious business dealings, spiritual awakenings and even reported legal drug trips in the Amazonian jungles of Peru.

"We do fear those mysteries, but this is a necessary evil," said Mrs. Dzienis.

Instead, they seem impressed by his status as a self-proclaimed millionaire financial whiz.

"Tyminski is for me a kind of professional," said Jerzy Krosnicki, a 44-year-old worker. "So far, we've had politicians but we haven't had people connected with business and the main problem in Poland doesn't lie in politics but in business. We can fulfil the banners and start working."

At news conferences, Tyminski fends off questioners and is consistently unable to present a clear economic programme that would accomplish such rapid improvement. He mainly stresses tax re-

form, which says would make it possible to earn money.

Trim and collected in well-cut suits, Tyminski appears to some as a breath of the West untainted by Poland's communist politics.

"Tyminski doesn't know much about Poland now but at least he is not connected with any cliques," said Mrs. Dzienis' husband, Andrzej. "Tyminski worked for his money — maybe more or maybe less honestly — but he worked."

The couple represent one kind of Tyminski supporter, a sort of Polish yuppie looking for economic success. In the unfilled sports hall Monday night were others: Pensioners struggling with prices that have risen 100 to 200 times since the lifting of communist-era controls that nearly bankrupted the country.

Workers who face the loss of their once guaranteed-for-life jobs as inefficient state-run factories are closed.

People generally discontented with their lives in Poland.

Tyminski comports himself modestly and disconcerts critics with an implacable calm. He graciously accepts hugs and offers reassurance to a woman who fears she cannot survive on her pension. He smilingly accepts a baby to be kissed. His supporters

Chad rebel chief dissolves parliament

N'DJAMENA, Chad (AP) — The rebel leader who toppled President Hissene Habre dissolved Chad's parliament and suspended the constitution a day after his victorious return to the capital, Chad Radio reported.

The moves Monday effectively put Idriss Deby's Popular Salvation Movement in charge of the country.

Deby returned to the capital Sunday in a black Mercedes after a series of military debacles prompted Habre, his former comrade-in-arms, to flee to neighbouring Cameroon.

The official Libyan News Agency, IANA, claimed Sunday that Habre had been killed. But state radio of Cameroon, Chad's western neighbour, reported Monday that Habre and eight of his ministers had taken refuge in the north. French government officials also said they had information that Habre was alive.

Earlier in the day, Deby freed at least 450 Libyan prisoners of war and promised he would establish a democratic government.

A Libyan plane left N'Djamena in the late afternoon to ferry the thin and ragged looking prisoners home.

Habre, along with the United States, claimed that Libya backed Deby. But France, which had repeatedly backed Habre against Libya since he came to power in a 1982 coup, said that this time the fighting was part of an internal conflict.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Monday that the U.S. government stands by its belief that Libya had supplied Deby's rebels. The French press also wide-

ly reported Libyan military aid to Deby.

She said the U.S. embassy was instructed to "monitor the situation closely to determine whether a new regime has effective control over the country." Ambassador Richard W. Bogosian said to meet with Deby, she said.

Chad Radio denounced the "economic, moral and political chaos" of the previous regime and "the abuses of a delinquent dictator."

The announcement after a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Popular Salvation Movement (MPS) spoke of the "active and imperative character" of the constitution and parliament.

Under the constitution, adopted on Dec. 10, 1989, the National Assembly president becomes interim leader in Habre's absence.

France, Chad's former colonial ruler and a key player in its war-torn history, had recognised assembly President Jean Alingue Bawaye as the interim leader.

Before dissolving the body, Deby met with Alingue, while MPS members received other high-ranking officials of the deposed government. Sources close to the talks said he hoped to calm fears and instill confidence. Deby has promised multiparty democracy.

France refused to launch air strikes against Chadian rebels to save the regime of Habre which it supported for eight years, Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement said.

In a television interview Monday night, Chevènement said the rebel army of Deby, was "about 40 per cent" armed by Libya.

Column

Scientists make \$74,000 in AIDS research wine sale

PARIS (R) — France's Pasteur Institute, the research laboratory where the AIDS virus was discovered in 1983, has said it raised \$70,000 francs (\$74,000) at a wine auction to finance a new laboratory. "I think we did pretty well," Pasteur director Maxime Schwartz said after Sunday's auction during a weekend of activities to mark world's AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) Day. The 100-million-franc (\$20-million) laboratory will be the site of experiments by 75 of the world's leading scientists trying to discover the secret of the mysterious disease which is spreading at epidemic proportions. Millionaire Philippe de Rothschild donated the two most expensive wines of the auction, a 1945 magnum bottle of Chateau Mouton Rothschild, which fetched 20,000 francs (\$4,000), and an 1869 bottle of Chateau Lafite Rothschild, which went for 15,000 francs (\$3,000). France, which has reported more AIDS cases than any other European country besides Switzerland, said nearly 10,000 people had developed the disease between March 1982 and March 1989.

5 get Kennedy Awards

WASHINGTON (AP) — The work of five performers and musicians who received the 1990 Kennedy Centre honours has been characterised by U.S. President George Bush as emphasising the "crucial role" the arts play in American society. During a star-studded, black-tie White House reception Sunday night, Bush honoured jazz musician Dizzy Gillespie, actress Katharine Hepburn, composer Jule Styne, director Billy Wilder and opera singer Pavarotti.

The president paid personal tribute to each award winner, describing Gillespie as a "magician of the musical form," and remembering Hepburn for her originality. The awards highlight the "crucial role that art must play in the fabric of our society," he said. Guests circulated at a cocktail party before leaving for a Kennedy Centre gala. Bush, meanwhile, left for a five-nation trip to Latin America.

At the Kennedy Centre, the five received state tributes from — among others — actors Bill Cosby, Jack Lemmon, Walter Matthau, and opera singer Marilyn Horne. The show, hosted by television newsman Walter Cronkite, included film clips of the lives and achievements of award recipients. Other personalities appearing in the show included columnist Art Buchwald, and actors Glenn Close, Angela Lansbury and Hal Linden.

Lancaster 'in good spirits'

LOS ANGELES (R) — Burt Lancaster, a star of more than 70 films, is in good spirits and resting comfortably after suffering a stroke Friday that has impaired his speech, hospital officials said. Lancaster, 77, who won a Hollywood Oscar for his role of a womanising Evangelist in Elmer Gantry, also has some weakness on his right side, the officials said. The actor underwent a four-hour emergency operation when he was taken to Los Alamitos Medical Centre Friday after collapsing. Lancaster had a heart bypass operation in August 1983 and in January 1980 underwent an 11-hour operation for what was described as an abdominal problem.

Sweethearts wed after 70-year misunderstanding

DECATUR, Illinois (AP) — Two sweethearts have married after mending a disagreement that kept them apart for almost 70 years. Charles Jones and Thelma Colvin dated as teenagers in the 1920s, but an argument at a party in Springfield ended their romance — temporarily. Jones broke off a two-year relationship with Colvin after seeing her strolling with another man, despite her protests of innocence. When they met again last fall, both widowed, the dispute no longer mattered. They got married Thursday in Decatur's Macon County courthouse. "I still think she was seeing that other guy," Jones, 84, joked. His bride, 85, insisted she wasn't. "I just happened to meet a chum I had known in school while I was out that evening," she said. "There was nothing in it, but Charles didn't believe me."